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OPINION METER
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INSIDE

LOCAL



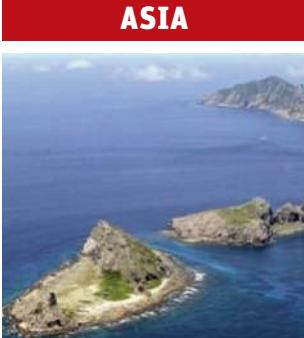
Chief Hospital Corpsman Joseph Santos was able to visit his family and friends in Guam. ➤ PAGE 18

BUSINESS



This holiday shopping season, it's Amazon vs. everyone else. ➤ PAGE 21

ASIA



China acknowledged Wednesday it let two American B-52 bombers fly unhindered through its newly declared air defense zone. ➤ PAGE 22

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Investigators trace cell phone number used by Crisostomo. PAGE 3

Inos, Kilili offer DHS specific ways to curb birth tourism

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Even months after jointly raising "birth tourism" concerns with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) sent another letter to DHS early this week but this time with specific suggestions to curb the problem such as requiring "all" airlines flying to the CNMI to adopt the pre-screening and other strategies that charter tour flights have developed to deter travel to the islands for the sole purpose of giving birth to an automatic U.S. citizen.



Inos



Sablan

Many of those who come to Saipan solely for birth tourism—mostly from China—do so by boarding a signature airline, Asiana Airlines, and not through charter tour flights. Asiana Airlines picks up passengers from Korea.

This is because charter companies that fly directly between China and the CNMI "proactively screen" their passengers to ensure compliance with parole conditions such as travel for the authorized purpose of tourism and on-time departure, the governor and delegate said.

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\$11M in ARRA money unspent, 37% of projects yet to be completed

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI has yet to spend some \$11 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money as of Oct. 30, 2013, representing some 9 percent of the \$119 million in ARRA money awarded to the islands since 2009. Moreover, 37 percent or 21 of 56 ARRA-funded projects remain incomplete.

Latest data from recovery.gov shows the CNMI was awarded a little over \$119 million in ARRA money through Sept. 30, 2013.

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FEEDING THE HUNGRY ON THANKSGIVING

A young girl looks on as her mother receives a plate of sumptuous meal from a volunteer as part of the Salvation Army's signature Thanksgiving lunch for indigent residents yesterday. Hundreds of children and adults got to partake in a Thanksgiving lunch, courtesy of Salvation Army pastors Wayne and Annie Gillespie and dozens of volunteers and sponsors. Salvation Army also serves hot meal in its soup kitchen in San Antonio on Fridays and Saturdays from 11am to 1pm, and on Sundays from 1:30pm to 2:30pm.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

'Termination of doc's privileges decision of CHC governing body'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The termination of an orthopedic surgeon's privileges to use the hospital treatment facility was not the sole deci-

sion of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. interim CEO, but a determination reached by all members of the organization's governing body.

Corporation interim CEO Esther L. Muna disclosed this to *Saipan Tribune*

yesterday in defense of herself against allegations made by Dr. Grant Walker that he was kicked out of the public hospital by the interim official.

Walker's short-term contract with CHCC ended Wednesday. But days prior

to this, he was served a notice informing the physician that his privileges at the hospital have been immediately terminated upon receipt of the notice. He was then barred from entry to the hospi-

See TERMINATION on Page 4

Local

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CUC questions non-inclusion of Fitial, Buckingham in SDLLC suit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The lawsuit filed by Saipan Development LLC against the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. over the botched power purchase agreement should be dismissed because SDLLC failed to include former governor Benigno R. Fitial, former attorney general Edward T. Buckingham, and the CNMI government, according to CUC.

In CUC's motion to dismiss the lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Wednesday, CUC legal counsel Deborah Fisher asserted, among other things, that SDLLC's court action failed to join necessary parties—Fitial, Buckingham, and the CNMI government.

The then governor Fitial and then AG Buckingham signed off on the 25-year, \$190.8-million power purchase agreement on Aug. 3, 2012.

Fisher cited that Federal Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 19 provides for required joinder of parties.

"Generally, a party must be joined if, in its absence, the court cannot accord complete relief among existing parties," the CUC counsel pointed out.

Fisher added that the lawsuit

should be dismissed because it did not explain the reasons for nonjoinder of necessary parties—Fitial, Buckingham, and the CNMI government.

Fisher said Rule 19 (c) requires that a plaintiff plead the reasons for not joining a party when asserting a claim for relief.

She said a complaint must state "the name, if known, of any person who is required to be joined if feasible but is not joined, and the reasons for not joining that person."

Fisher said SDLLC's complaint should be dismissed because it did not state the name of persons who would be required to be joined if feasible but were not joined, as well as the reasons for not joining those persons.

Fisher said the unnamed parties that entered into this illegal power purchase agreement and other contracts should be held liable, not CUC.

"If the unnamed parties are not made part of this lawsuit, then the utility will have to pursue the unnamed parties separately to recover," she said.

In the same motion, Fisher asserted that even if Fitial signed the PPA and other contracts with SDLLC as then governor of the CNMI, he was still required to

See CUC on Page 4



DELEGATION SESSION

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Saipan Mayor Donald Flores, right, confers with lawmakers during break in the session of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation Wednesday. SNILD approved Wednesday \$34,000 for the purchase of an upright lifter, trailer, as well as repair and maintenance and rental equipment for the Office of the Mayor of Saipan.

DURING TIME ROMERO WENT MISSING

Investigators trace cell phone number used by Crisostomo

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Police investigators were able to establish the cell phone number that Joseph A. Crisostomo used on the night before and morning that murdered bartender Emerita Romero went missing, according to the Office of the Attorney General.

In the CNMI government's supplemental brief on cell tower records filed last week in the Superior Court, chief prosecutor Shelli Neal said investigations revealed that when Romero went missing, Crisostomo was using a cell phone that belonged to his female friend.

Neal said police sought and

Man arrested for allegedly threatening to kill himself in front of wife's parents' house

A man who was arrested last August for allegedly stalking his estranged wife, was arrested again last week on charges he threatened to kill himself in front of her parents' house where she and their children are staying.

Augustine B. Pangelinan, 38, was arrested for disturbing the peace and contempt of court. A \$2,000 cash bail was imposed for his temporary release.

Detective Rhonda C. John stated in her report that on Nov. 6, 2013, the person who served as a third-party custodian for Pangelinan called a police officer to report about the defendant's offense.

Apparently, the wife complained that Pangelinan called her from work and threatened to kill himself in front of her parents' house.

The third-party custodian then called Pangelinan and told him that police will be looking for him, but that he stated he did not care because he has a gun.

were granted a search warrant seeking subscriber information and toll records related to Crisostomo's friend's cell phone number and for Romero's cell phone number.

In response to the search warrant, the chief prosecutor said the IT&E manager for network services submitted a spreadsheet containing multiple fields of data, including calling number, originating tower, dialed number, called number, terminating tower, originating time, disconnect time, call duration, answer time, calling mobile info, called mobile info, and others.

Neal said all information included in the spreadsheet is information that is rou-

tinely gathered in the ordinary course of business by IT&E for billing purposes.

The information, she said, is then relied upon and used by IT&E in the ordinary course of business to bill its customers, resolve disputes, and detect and/or prevent fraud.

Neal said they have not proposed to call the manager as an expert witness because the provision, acquisition and/or compilation of data gathered during regularly conducted activity that was provided in response to the search warrant for toll records did not require any scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge.

"Anyone, including a jani-

tor, can read and/or interpret the data displayed in the spreadsheet without the need for additional education, training, skills, certificates or degrees," she pointed out.

Neal asked the court to deny Crisostomo's motion to exclude

the testimony of the IT&E manager and the cell tower records.

On Feb. 5, 2012, Romero was reported as a missing person when she did not show up for work. Police's subsequent investigation revealed that she called 911 in the early morning hours of Feb. 5.

Investigative efforts led Federal Bureau of Investigation agents to Marpi area where

Romero's body was found in the abandoned La Fiesta Mall in San Roque on Feb. 7, 2012.

Crisostomo is facing charges for the kidnapping and murder of Romero.

Investigators said Romero was last seen boarding a tinted car near her house in Garapan on Feb. 5, 2012. Police established that she mistook the car for a taxicab.

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USDA reminds producers of sales closing date for non-insurable crops

HONOLULU, Hawaii—The Hawaii and Pacific Basin USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, Diane Ley urges producers who want to purchase coverage through the Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to do so before the sales closing date of Dec. 2, 2013.

The sales closing date is actually Dec. 1, 2013, but producers have until Monday, Dec. 2, 2013, to purchase coverage this year because Dec. 1 falls on a Sunday.

Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program provides

financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields/grazing loss, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including drought, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes.

The following crops have a NAP application closing date of Dec. 2, 2013: grazed forage, honey, fruits and vegetables and other non-insurable crops covered by NAP.

"Noninsurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program allows producers to protect their in-

vestment by purchasing coverage for noninsurable crops," said Ley. "Natural disasters are an unavoidable part of farming and ranching and FSA programs like NAP help producers recover when they experience a loss," she said.

In order to meet eligibility requirements for NAP, crops must be noninsurable, commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available.

In the event of a natural disaster, NAP covers the amount of

loss greater than 50 percent of the expected production based on the approved yield and reported acreage.

Eligible producers can apply for coverage using form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage." Producers must file the application and pay a service fee by the December 2nd deadline. The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Limited resource farmers

may request a waiver of the service fee at the time the application for coverage is filed. Producers must recertify their limited resource status for each

year that a waiver is requested.

For more information on sales closing dates and NAP, contact a local County FSA office. (PR)



CANARIES DONATE TO PH RELIEF EFFORTS

San Vicente Student Council officers pose with the donations for victims of supertyphoon Haiyan (Yolanda). From left, SVES STUCCO president Ro'anna Tudela, sergeant-at-arms Tarrence Babauta, secretary Terry Ann Terry, treasurer Sommer Gomez, and vice president Nicole Malasarte.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



San Vicente Student Council officers, along with STUCCO representatives, LBC Mabuhay representatives, and STUCCO advisor Christopher Cabrera pose in front of the LBC van after handing over food and clothing donations for victims of supertyphoon Haiyan.

ARRA

From Page 1

As of Oct. 30, the CNMI was able to draw down or spend a little over \$108 million.

This leaves over \$11 million still unspent.

Of 56 ARRA-funded projects, only 35 or 62 percent have been completed as of Oct. 30. They are worth more than \$70 million.

Twelve projects are more than 50 percent completed, and six are less than 50 percent finished.

Three have not even started, involving \$4.5 million.

But the still unspent ARRA money for the CNMI listed on recovery.gov is safe, meaning it would not go back to the U.S. Treasury.

This is because it has already been obligated or that there is a waiver from the Dodd-Frank Act, even if the project has not started. The Dodd-Frank Act did say that ARRA funds "not obligated by the end of 2012 would go back to the U.S. Treasury."

CUC

From Page 2

adhere to the CNMI procurement regulations.

SDLLC is suing CUC for breach of express contract and implied-in-fact contract over the voided controversial PPA it signed with then governor Fitial.

The Delaware-based contractor of the PPA asked the

ARRA money paid for hundreds of jobs in the CNMI, many of them at the Public School System.

Of the over \$119 million in ARRA funds awarded to the CNMI, 40 percent or over \$48 million went to education, mainly PSS.

Energy and environment projects got the second biggest chunk at almost \$39 million, followed by transportation-related projects at over \$15 million.

The rest went to infrastructure, family, public safety, research and development/science, housing, health, and job training.

The Obama administration's ARRA program was meant to jumpstart the economy, as well as create and save jobs.

ARRA funds have tremendously moved CNMI projects but because they're drying up, the Inos administration hopes that the negative impact of the end of the ARRA program and sequestration will be cushioned by an improved tourism industry.

court to award the company damages for its reliance on the CUC promise, and the amount incurred while evaluating, negotiating, and preparing to perform under the PPA to build a power plant.

The alleged secretive signing of the no-bid, 25-year PPA was one of the issues that led to the filing of impeachment charges against Fitial, who subsequently resigned as governor.

TERMINATION

From Page 1

tal due to a series of allegations including misconduct and for demonstrating inappropriate gestures toward a minor client and a staffer as well as insubordination, which the physician denied. He also labeled the action taken against him as a form of bullying from the interim CEO.

Muna had also denied the bullying accusation alleged by Walker.

Muna yesterday disclosed that as CEO, she has no full authority to do what Walker is alleging and that the physician's termination is a decision consulted with and made by the governing body. Among the members of this decision-making body include Muna, acting chief financial officer Cora Ada, and director for medical affairs Dr. Sherleen Osman.

"The CEO alone cannot remove a physician's privileges. The governing body has that authority and it consists of other members besides the CEO and DMA, and it's always with con-

sultation from our legal counsel," Muna told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that the authority of the governing body is clearly defined by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

She said that per CMS policy, "Only the hospital's governing body can grant a practitioner privileges to provide care in the hospital."

Last Tuesday, Walker expressed great disappointment on the action taken against him by the corporation. It was learned that without the privileges to use the CHC treatment facilities, the physician cannot practice his profession on island. Walker earlier planned to stay on Saipan to serve as a private orthopedic surgeon after his contract with CHC.

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune*, the disgruntled physician also shared how he was embarrassed by the corporation when he was served the termination notice at the clinic last Nov. 23, a Saturday, while still attending to patients.

Muna yesterday denied the doctor's story about how the notice was delivered.

Saipan Tribune learned that it was hospital emergency preparedness director Warren Villagomez who personally handed to the doctor the termination notice but the director revealed that it was never done in the clinic as claimed by the physician.

"Saturday, Nov. 23. No clinic. When I got the call from the CEO office that the letter for Dr. Walker is ready I contacted my manager (Jack Guerrero) for back up. I also requested backup from the Department of Public Safety which was provided for our safety and witness of execution of the letter intended to be served," Villagomez revealed yesterday.

He said his group first went to the doctor's apartment but failed to locate him in his residence. The director, along with his backups, continued to look for the physician until they found him along the Garapan area.

"We went over to Dr. Walker's apartment but he was not around. I called his cell phone and introduced myself and explained that I need to see him in person. The doctor said it's not going to happen because he's

busy. I asked him twice," added Villagomez.

While driving around, Villagomez disclosed that they found the doctor in a bar in Garapan and there he was served the notice.

"We drove around and we saw Dr. Walker was seated at a table at Johnny's Bar and Grill along Beach Road. He was served the notice at 5:59pm on Nov. 23," disclosed Villagomez, as he belied claims that the physician was served his walking paper at the clinic while treating patients.

Saipan Tribune learned that Walker's privileges at the CHC were immediately terminated because of reports received by the CEO regarding the physician's disruptive behavior and unprofessional conduct to patients and staff. It was also learned that the physician was accused of inappropriate gestures to a female minor patient and inappropriate words to a female staff, which forced the CHCC governing body to take immediate action. All these allegations were denied by the physician when interviewed by *Saipan Tribune*.

solidify confidence in the parole program itself, which has already resulted in Chinese tourists accounting for 26 percent of all arrivals in the CNMI and ranking second in terms of economic impact.

They added that refining the parole program would also support the president's National Tourism and Travel Strategy, which is meant in part to encourage tourism from rapidly developing countries, such as China.

DHS' decision to waive U.S. visa requirement for Chinese and Russian tourists has brought substantial tourism economic activities to the CNMI.

But once DHS decides to lift that waiver, the impact on the CNMI would be devastating.

In a previous interview, Sablan said the CNMI also would not want to catch the ire of the Chinese government, which can easily put a stop to the flow of Chinese tourists to the Commonwealth.

Their Nov. 25 letter is a follow up to their April 18, 2013 letter to then DHS secretary Janet Napolitano, thanking her for her decision to use parole

authority to allow tourists from China and Russia to enter the CNMI without U.S. visa.

"These tourists have become the cornerstone of economic recovery in our islands; and the multi-year track record demonstrates that the parole program can coexist with United States security interests," they said.

Inos and Sablan's letter, however, also expressed concern about the use of the CNMI as one of the many places in the United States attracting so-called birth tourism from China.

"And we urged Customs and Border Protection vigilance. We want to share with you now our further observation in this regard," they said in this week's letter to DHS' Beers.

"Birth tourism" refers to travel for the purpose of giving birth to an automatic U.S. citizen child in the CNMI or any other U.S. state or territory.

The United States is one of a few countries that observe jus soli, which grants automatic citizenship to children born within its territory, regardless of the parents' nationality or citizenship.

DHS

From Page 1

Since 2009, tourists from China and Russia are allowed to visit the CNMI without a U.S. visa pursuant to the DHS secretary's use of parole authority.

Inos and Sablan said record of experience shows that companies operating charter tour flights have been most successful in ensuring that tourists meet the parole program's requirements.

"As far as we know from industry data, these charter operators have a low rate of entry refusal and a high rate of timely departure," Inos and Sablan said in their joint Nov. 25 letter to DHS acting secretary Rand Beers.

A copy of the letter was made available only yesterday, although Sablan confirmed a letter was forthcoming, during an interview last Sunday.

The federal government, through DHS and its component agencies, now control CNMI borders.

The governor and the delegate said improvements based on experience would also further

Inos to Borja: Raise appointment issue with court

Gov. Eloy S. Inos said Sen. Joaquin H. Borja (Ind-Tinian) would have to raise with the court his concern about the Supreme Court's recent ruling that paved the way for his new appointment as a member of the 18th Senate based on the 2012 elections results and not the 2009 race.

Borja told *Saipan Tribune* that since he was appointed anew, this time based on the results of the 2012 race, then he should be given a four-year term ending January 2017 instead of only up to January 2015 based on the 2009 race.

But the governor, in an interview, said this is not up to him. He said he was only following the court decision.

"If he (Borja) was a different person in 2009, maybe the letter would be a different issue. Maybe we say well it's a different election, and it was not you, it's going to be somebody

Saipan lawmakers approve bill renaming Kagman fire station

By a vote of 16-0, Saipan lawmakers passed a bill renaming the Kagman Fire Station to the "Ernie T. Dela Cruz Fire Station #5" in honor of the late firefighter, Ernie Teigita Dela Cruz.

Dela Cruz worked as a firefighter III for the Department of Public Safety's Fire Division for more than 17 years prior to his untimely passing during a physical training exercise at work.

House Local Bill 18-20, authored by Rep. Antonio Agulto (Ind-Saipan), now goes to the governor for action after the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation's Wednesday passage.

The late Dela Cruz, according to the local bill, was dedicated

else. Fortunately, it's the same person... But if he has qualms, then maybe that's something that will have to be raised to the Supreme Court," the governor said.

That Supreme Court decision paved the way for the appointment of Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) to complete the unfinished term of former senator Juan Ayuyu now awaiting sentencing for smuggling endangered fruit bats from Rota to Saipan.

Borja also questions Manglona's appointment based on the 2012 election, and not in the 2009 race when Ayuyu ran for office.

Inos appointed Borja in March this year to fill the vacancy for a Tinian senatorial seat when former president Jude U. Hofsneider became lieutenant governor, since Borja was the second highest vote getter in

the 2009 elections.

But when the Supreme Court recently ruled that the term "last election" referred to the 2012 race and not 2009, the Senate vacancy appointment tipped in

favor of Manglona.

Applying the same principle, Inos also affirmed Borja's appointment based on the results of the 2012 elections wherein he was also the second highest

vote-getter.

But Borja claims the Supreme Court ruling was wrong. He added that people also need to raise questions about the court ruling. He said if he does not get

the four-year appointment, he plans to run as Tinian senator in the 2014 elections.

Borja said he is considering bringing the matter to federal court. (*Haidee V. Eugenio*)

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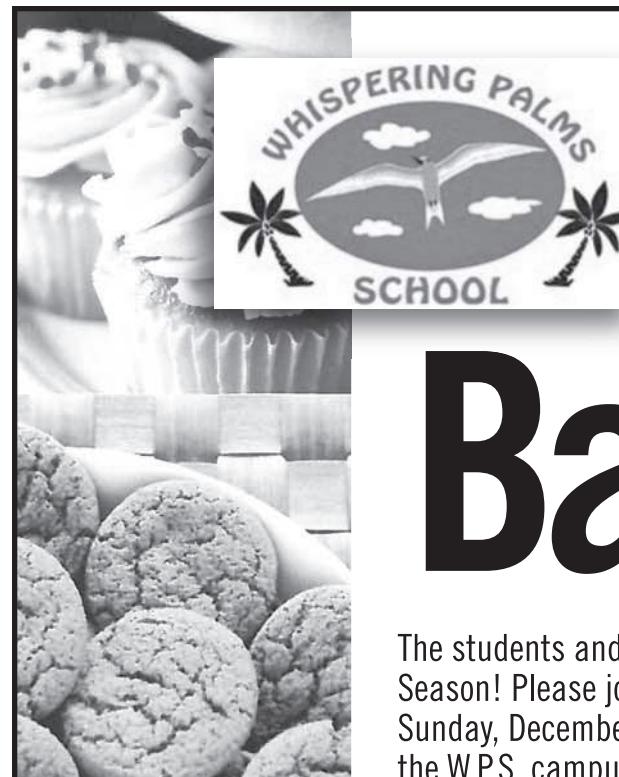
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Garage and Bake Sale

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Thank you to The American Red Cross, Get Covered Canopies, Saipan Super Saver and Siberian Restaurant for your support.

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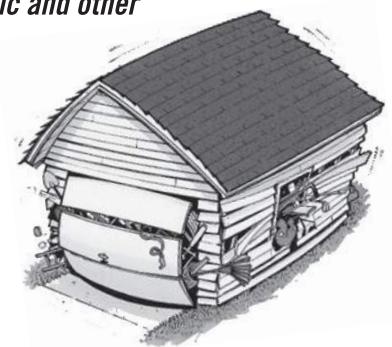
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Non-responsive scholars to be referred to AGO

»Govt collected only \$55K from defaulted scholars in FY 2013

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Many defaulted scholars who owe the government significant amount of monies may soon be prosecuted for their unpaid obligations to the CNMI Scholarship Office after its administrator bared plans to refer non-responsive accounts to the Office of Attorney General.

Scholarship administrator Rose Pangelinan disclosed this to *Saipan Tribune*, hinting that legal action will be charged against defaulted scholars who continue to violate the agreement they earlier signed with the government.

Based on the records of the

scholarship office, only \$55,367 has been collected in fiscal year 2013 from defaulted scholars.

Pangelinan revealed that one of her goals as administrator is to increase the collection amount this fiscal year.

"All agreements made through the memorandum of agreements between CNMI Scholarship Office and recipients are legally binding. If a recipient is in default of the conditions of their MOA, he/she is required to repay back the defaulted total amount received," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

She encourages all previous recipients to comply and submit an official transcript, copy of their diploma (if they gradu-

ated), employment verification, and fill out a previous recipient or graduate form with the office.

According to the administrator, her office is currently updating all accounts especially the Honor Scholarship accounts for those who have defaulted and are in arrears. She admitted that many are non-responsive to date.

"They have not responded to requests to submit necessary documents for compliance purposes and/or demands for payment on some accounts. These accounts will eventually be forwarded to the Attorney General's Office for legal proceedings," she warned.

Of the over 100 beneficiaries of the CNMI Scholarship Office

who potentially graduated last school year, only a few have actually notified the government about the completion of their studies, violating the agreement they signed with the CNMI Scholarship Office.

Pangelinan earlier disclosed that only less than 20 scholars who graduated in May and June have complied with the memorandum of agreement that gives these beneficiaries 90 days to notify the government about their graduation.

CNMI scholars, upon receiving their checks, sign a memorandum of agreement that mandates the scholar's responsibility to notify the CNMI Scholarship Office within 90 days once they

graduate or fail to enroll.

Saipan Tribune learned that if they fail to do this, these scholars will be in default and all the monies they received from the scholarship program will become a loan that they must pay back to the government.

Under the scholarship policy, beneficiaries are also required to return to the CNMI and work here after college graduation. This has not been the case for many students who received large amounts of financial aid from the government.

It was also learned that if a defaulted scholar has no job or can't find one to repay the "loan," a deferment can be worked out with the Scholarship Office if they wish to.

The Scholarship Office has

two program offerings: the Educational Assistance Program and Honors Scholarship Program.

Each year, a potential number of EAP graduates are expected to return and work in the CNMI as a form of "repayment" for the financial aid they received for their college studies.

The scholarship program has been criticized in the past as a "very generous" initiative that is being abused by many scholars. At present, the CNMI government is struggling to maintain this financial assistance program as a result of declining revenues and collection.

In 2011, it was learned that these default scholars owe the government some \$4 million, an amount that continues to increase.

Habitual offender gets 13-month prison term for kicking cop, violating probation

A habitual offender on probation was slapped with a 13-month jail term for kicking a police officer, who responded to a domestic violence incident.

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman sentenced Sharp Betao Ngirutoi to a total of 13 months in prison, to be served day-to-day without parole.

Ngirutoi, 33, was given credit for the time he already served at the Department of Corrections.

For assaulting the police officer, the defendant was ordered to spend six months in jail. For violating his probation, he was ordered to spend seven months in prison of his unsuspended sentence in connection with his previous criminal convictions. This brings to a total of 13-month jail term.

Upon completing his jail term, Ngirutoi will be placed on supervised probation for two years. He was required to pay a \$100 fine plus court and probation fees during the first six months of his

probation, in addition to any fines and costs imposed in his previous convictions.

The defendant was required to undergo anger management counseling and prohibited from possessing or consuming any alcoholic beverages during his probation. He was ordered to complete 100 hours of community work service.

The Office of the Attorney General charged the defendant with two counts of assault and battery, and one count each of disturbing the peace, obstructing justice, and resisting arrest.

Ngirutoi and counsel signed a plea deal with the government. He pleaded guilty to one count of assault and battery, and one count of obstructing justice. He also admitted violating his probation. The OAG moved to dismiss the remaining charges as part of the plea agreement. The court granted the motion.

According to the factual basis of the plea agreement, Ngirutoi

got into a fight with his girlfriend, who called the police. When Police Officer Jonathan Cepeda arrived at the scene, the defendant kicked the officer and refused to get inside the police's vehicle.

Ngirutoi also told the officer that he knows his face already and threatened that if he would see him out there he's going to get him.

Ngirutoi currently owes the Office of Adult Probation \$35 in assessment fees and \$240 in probation fees. He also owes \$1,603.17 in restitution and has not performed any of his 100 hours of community work service. He also failed to appear at four review hearings.

In June 2009, Ngirutoi and another man were arrested for beating up a man across the post office in Chalan Kanoa. The victim, a Chinese national, suffered serious injuries. He has prior arrests for assault, burglary, and for not appearing at a court hearing. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



CONGRESSIONAL VISIT

Jimin Kaikaku Kaigi, a group of 11 congressmen from Shizuoka prefecture in Japan, made a courtesy call on Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio, at center front, on Nov. 15, 2013. The group made their first visit to Saipan and Tinian on Nov. 13-16, 2013.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Applicants sought for new leadership program

To build more effective and cohesive leadership that would enable some of the "best and brightest" to step up to assume major roles in our islands, the newly launched Marianas Chapter of the Pacific Century Fellows Program will be accepting applications, starting Dec. 2, 2013 for the 2014 Program Year.

Based on the Pacific Century Fellows Program in Hawaii, founded by former Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann, the PCF Marianas Chapter is a non-profit organization that will specialize in leadership development and community service.

AFTER TRANSITION PERIOD

Administration eyes Fund reorganization

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Inos administration, through press secretary Angel A. Demapan, said it will reorganize the NMI Retirement Fund as soon as the agency completes its transition period.

As to how the executive branch will do this, he didn't elaborate to *Saipan Tribune*.



Inos

"The Retirement Fund is in a period of transition with the establishment of the Settlement Fund. [But] once the transition is completed, NMIRF will be organized in line with its drastically reduced duties and responsibilities as a result of the settlement agreement approved by the court," disclosed Demapan.

The Fund's assets were ordered to be moved into the settlement fund under the control of federal court. This happened following the U.S. District Court's approval in the Betty Johnson's class action suit.

Appointed settlement trustee

attorney Joyce Tang will be administering the agency's assets.

Gov. Eloy S. Inos in an early interview with *Saipan Tribune* said that once checks are disbursed to members and retirees he believes that the Fund as an entity is not even needed. The issuance of remaining checks of members who did not withdraw their contributions and the periodic issuance of pension checks to retirees can be performed by other agencies and groups instead of the Fund.

From the governor's point of view, he doesn't think that the CNMI really needs to continue the Retirement Fund as an entity. If things are resolved, he earlier said that it's only a matter of paying annuities and the Department of Finance or the banks can do that.

The Fund had disbursed checks to members last Oct. 15. Public Law 17-82 allows Fund members to withdraw the full amount of their contributions without separating from the government.

development and community service.

The entire program is modeled after the national White House Fellows program with the intent of developing and bringing together strong community leaders to strategically tackle some of today's most pressing matters.

With this initiative, Jerry Tan, president of Tan Holdings, hopes other businesses will join in the effort to groom young prospective leaders of and for the CNMI.

Inspired by the success and leadership network of the Hawaii PCF, Tan reveals, "The PCF Marianas Chapter seeks

to enlighten and empower Fellows to be more active in their communities, and better prepared to make informed decisions impacting the future of the CNMI."

Candidates must be between the ages of 25-45 years old from various areas of expertise (tourism, healthcare, government, education, military, law, small business, non-profit, etc). Candidates must demonstrate strong leadership, professionalism, and have a track record of active volunteerism and community service.

Class size for the program year is limited, and candidates will be chosen through a rigorous interview and selection process by a blue ribbon panel of judges.

If selected, the program kicks off with a mandatory weekend retreat and monthly all-day meetings thereafter with a focus on a specific subject or theme.

During these meetings, fellows will meet with renowned local and guest leaders, and will also experience specific site visits to enhance their overall understanding of the particular topic. Through such activities and sessions, fellows will be in an environment that will foster open-mindedness, creativity, and constructive problem solving. Plans also call for an educational mission to Hawaii with the goal of observing and experiencing some of the mutual challenges we share as island-

ers, learn some new ideas, strategies and solutions and network with the Pacific Century Fellows in the Aloha State.

Upon graduating and completing the nine-month program, fellows will be better able to lead not only in their respective industries, but in the bigger picture of the communities they serve and the islands in which they live.

Applications will be accepted up to Dec. 31, 2013 and packets may be obtained beginning Dec. 2 at the Tan Siu Lin Foundation Office located on the 2nd Floor of the JP Center Building (Beach Road-Garapan). Please call Maggie Sablan at 234-0609 ext. 117 or send an email to administrator@pcf-marianas.com for details. (PR)

Pacific Century Fellows modeled after White House Fellows

expertise (tourism, healthcare, government, education, military, law, small business, non-profit, etc). Candidates must demonstrate strong leadership, professionalism, and have a track record of active volunteerism and community service.

Plans also call for an educational mission to Hawaii with the goal of observing and experiencing some of the mutual challenges we share as island-

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SOLICITATION TO SUBMIT REQUESTS FOR CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Recently a motion was filed to reopen Civil Case No. CV-01-0031, *DOE I, et al., v. THE GAP, INC., et al.*, which was granted and Timothy H. Bellas, has been appointed by the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands to distribute certain residual funds which were previously held in trust for a contingent liability that never required payment.

Therefore, a residual amount of money exists which, by the terms of the Settlement Agreement in the above entitled case, is to be donated to charity.

As a result, all non-profit organizations, who qualify for charitable status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (c), are asked to submit a request for a donation from this Residual Fund. Preference will be given to organizations whose charitable services are available to all members of the CNMI Community.

At a minimum, requests should state: 1) the amount requested; 2) describe what type of charitable activity the organization is involved in and 3) how any funds which may be donated to the organization would be used. Requests from organizations who are not well known as charitable, should also submit evidence of their 501(c) status.

Please send all donation requests to:

Timothy H. Bellas
P.O. Box 502845
Saipan, MP 96950

All requests must be in writing and received no later than December 13, 2013 in order to be considered.

The decision to donate and the amount of such donations are entirely discretionary. This solicitation shall create no rights or obligations in or to any third party. However, a proposed list of donations will be submitted to and is subject to the final approval by the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ Timothy H. Bellas

Coast Guard helicopter crew struck by laser

HONOLULU—A Coast Guard helicopter crew was targeted by an individual with a laser pointer while flying in the vicinity of Waimanalo Bay on Oahu, Saturday.

The lased MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew was conducting a search in response to an uncorrelated distress call when the incident occurred. Four crew-members observed the laser sweeping the aircraft and one of the pilots was directly struck.

This is the fifth lasing incident within the last year at Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point.

The Coast Guard is working with the Federal Aviation Administration and the Honolulu Police Department to investigate the incident.

"We were searching off Waimanalo following a received mayday call when we were hit by a green laser," said Lt. Cmdr. Roger Barr, an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter pilot at Air Station Barbers Point. "We protected our eyes quickly enough to avoid being blinded, reported the incident, and were able to continue the mission. This was the air station's first East Oahu lasing incident in recent years. The frequency of incidents locally and nationally is increasing at a dangerous rate and the public needs to know that when we are hit by a laser, we are no longer effective at finding that lost family member or friend."

Laser pointers can cause glare, afterimage, flash blindness or temporary loss of night vision, all causing a great danger to the crew. If any aircrew member's vision is compromised during a flight, Coast Guard flight rules dictate that the aircraft must abort their mission. If an aircrew member is lased it severely compromises their ability to fly the aircraft and complete the mission safely. In order to ensure their health, aircrew members are taken off flight duty until cleared by a flight surgeon before flying again. This hinders the Coast Guard's ability to respond to people in distress, training, and homeland security missions.

It is a federal crime, as well as violation of most states' laws to aim a laser pointer at an aircraft. If an individual is caught purposefully lasing an aircraft, punishment ranges from being arrested or having to pay a civil penalty of \$11,000 for a single offense, to more than \$30,000 if the individual has multiple offenses. People witnessing this crime are strongly encouraged to immediately call 911 to report the incident. The FAA tracks laser incidents by city, state and nationality and initiated about 95 civil penalty cases in 2011 nationwide. (PR)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

November 29, 2005

Three killed in vehicular accident

Three persons were killed while one was seriously injured in a vehicular accident along Beach Road in Chalan Laulau on early morning Sunday. Acting Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric David said the fatalities—two men and a woman—suffered severe injuries to the head and body and were pronounced dead on that same day at the Commonwealth Health Center. David said the fatalities, all Chinese workers aged 26 and 27, were on board a white 1997 four-door Honda Civic sedan. The DPS spokesman said the identities of the three will not be released to the media until their next of kin have been notified.

Rare disease found in NMI children

A disease mostly found in adults, called Acanthosis Nigricans, was discovered in children in the CNMI during the 2005 Health Survey for the Children conducted throughout Commonwealth. Dr. Rachel Novotny of the University of Hawaii presented the preliminary data on the Health Pacific Child Project Survey at the Office on Aging's Man'amko Center yesterday morning. Novotny said although among the 420 respondents in the survey only nine cases were identified to have the skin discoloration disease. Novotny said seven of the nine children with the disease were boys and two were girls and seven among the nine were above eight years old.

November 29, 2006

NMI strategizes on wage hike

Business and government leaders plan to hire consultants, including an economist and a Washington D.C.-based legal firm, to fight against a move to impose federal minimum wage and immigration control in the CNMI. This was discussed during yesterday's Strategic Economic Development Council meeting at the Governor's Office on Capital Hill. The meeting was attended by business owners and executives, as well as lawmakers and other government officials. "The recommendation is to hire an economist from either University of Guam or University of Hawaii to do an economic study of the CNMI, make economic projections. It's important that we use credible reports when we present our case in Congress," said Saipan Chamber of Commerce president-elect Juan "Pan" Guerrero, who was present in yesterday's SEDC meeting.

15 schools decorate Paseo de Marianas

At least 15 private and public schools and groups in the CNMI will gather at the Paseo De Marianas today to spiff up the area with Christmas decorations. Division of Environmental Quality public information officer Reina Camacho said the project is part of the first Christmas Festival that will be held in Garapan. The project is spearheaded by Paseo de Marianas Promoters Inc. Spokesperson Misako Kamata said the group is a non-profit corporation that was set up to erase the negative perceptions of Saipan, especially the Garapan district. "The project aims to promote it as a safe and healthy area for the local community and tourists, being a family-oriented place," said Kamata.

November 29, 2007

Shell breaks through \$4 barrier

Pump prices for select fuel types broke through the psychological \$4 barrier yesterday after Shell Marianas raised its pump prices by 10 cents, marking the third time this month that the company increased its retail prices on Saipan. The 10-cent increase, effective last night, applies to gallon prices for regular, premium, and diesel fuel. Shell's price for self-service regular gasoline is now at \$3.869 a gallon, while self-service premium gas is now at \$4.059 a gallon. For full service, Shell's price for regular will now be \$3.999, while premium is at \$4.179. Shell's diesel will now be at \$4.139 per gallon.

Organizers firm up plans for NMI's first unity march

Representative-elect Tina Sablan will lead the CNMI's first unity march to dramatize protest against the new local labor law and to express support for the extension of federal immigration law to the Commonwealth. In a news briefing yesterday morning at a pavilion along Beach Road in Garapan, Sablan described the march as "a historic and peaceful demonstration" for labor and immigration reform. It will be held on Dec. 7, Friday, starting at 4:30pm at Kilili Beach and moving down Beach Road to the American Memorial Park.

ESFDB STUCCO helps with typhoon relief efforts

No doubt people have been following the tragic situation in the Philippines due to the super typhoon that hit on Nov. 8, claiming innocent lives and left thousands homeless.

Relief efforts are in high gear in the aftermath of super typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda).

The United States has donated millions of dollars in the past weeks.

More than a dozen charities nationwide are raising funds to help victims of the storm, which left hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes and millions in need of basic necessities like food and water.

In the CNMI, government agencies, local groups, schools, and churches are mounting a major relief effort to help victims of the Philippine typhoon.

To join in the relief efforts, Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja student council officers spearheaded a coin drive to help raise funds for the typhoon victims. The funds raised by the student council officers will be earmarked for supporting relief operations in the Philippines hardest hit by the typhoon.

According to school principal Carmen H. Atalig, "I am touched by our student council officers leading a major drive to assist the Philippines. I admire their efforts."

"I want to express to the people in the Philippines that are victims of the storm of our sensitivity to this enormous tragedy. The amount of money solicited is not the greatest in the world, but we want to demonstrate that we care, and we want to be an example for other school entities that will also contribute," added Atalig.

"Pray for strength for those who are still stranded, low on food and water and are feeling helpless. This is such a great opportunity to help in the name



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy, happy birthday to a dynamic, phenomenal, outstanding, awesomely great, fabulous individual who celebrates her birthday today, Nov. 29. Happy birthday to Darrah Benavente! May you be blessed with many, many more birthdays to come! We love you! You are truly a blessing in all our lives! Cheers to you and many more years! Love always, your Junie Buggers, your family, friends, most especially your Manta Ray family, Misadventurers, and SATC Crew.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Student council officers and their fellow students looks on as Student Council Class president Angelica Lucero presents the money solicited for the typhoon relief efforts in the Philippines to Rev. Fr. Charlie Borja.

of Jesus Christ," added student council and 4th-6th grade adviser Mary Rose Lucero.

"When you watch on TV about the typhoon victims, you feel helpless, but sometimes you just have to be strong and take action to help. Right now, we the student council officers

are taking action by asking our loving and giving Luta community to donate for a cause," said student council president Angelica Lucero.

"The wonderful people of the Philippines have suffered much in this disaster and deserve all the help we can give. I am impressed by our school student council officers for leading the drive and going out to the Luta community to solicit support," said student council adviser and school board president Edward Maratita, Jr.

"We are grateful for the Rota people's generosity and compassion following what has been called one of the strongest storms in world history," said student council public relations officer Marnecia Hocog.

"Regardless of who you are, where you're from, what you believe in, as true Catholics we should be united as one to help our fellow brothers and sisters," added student council secretary Tyra Reese Calvo.

"Because it's the season of giving, the people of Rota gave to the people of the Philippines.

Thank you for helping my countrymen," said student council member Angelo Lucero.

"During our coin drive, we have lots of people on Rota with good hearts," said student council vice president Loreville Clitar.

"The wonderful people of the Philippines have suffered much in this disaster and deserve all the help we can give. I am impressed by our school student council officers for leading the drive and going out to the Luta community to solicit support," said student council adviser and school board president Edward Maratita, Jr.

Supertyphoon Haiyan is one of the most powerful typhoons in recorded history to ever hit land and likely the deadliest natural disaster to plague the Philippines.

The ESFDB administration and board of directors would like to express their appreciation to the STUCO officers and the Luta community for their generous donations. (*Edward Maratita, Jr.*)

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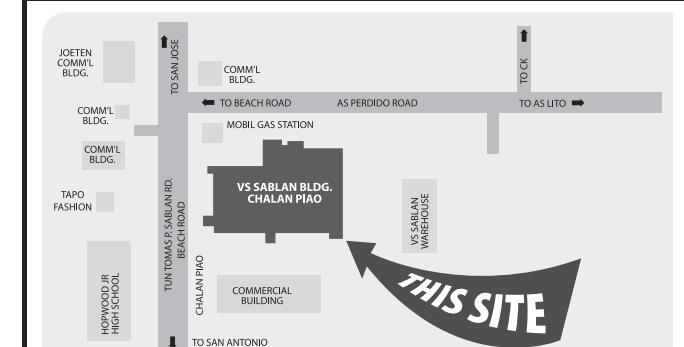
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Opinion

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

China's proposed economic and social reforms could help US

For at least the next decade, if not way beyond, the decisions that China's leaders make will reverberate far past the Asian power's borders. If China modernizes its society, particularly its economy, the implications will be important for the United States.

That includes a major exporting state such as Texas. Companies located here have long done business in China. Texas Instruments, for example, started a Beijing office in 1986. The Richardson-based company now has offices in 18 cities across China.

So, it is more than passing news in Texas when Chinese authorities discuss changing repressive practices that have long kept the country outside the international mainstream. The same is true when they talk about making it easier for private firms to participate in the Chinese economy, the world's second largest.

Chinese leaders made big news last week by announcing a 60-point plan of reforms. It's still just a plan; the changes will matter only if they are enacted. U.S. leaders should remain skeptical until Chinese authorities practice what they have announced.

Still, there were headline-grabbers. The biggest were the proposals to relax the nation's one-child policy and to curtail the use of "re-education" labor camps. For decades, these policies have limited the rights of families and threatened the freedom to dissent. They were a clear affront to human rights.

China now proposes to let urban families have two children if one of the parents is an only child. Today, such families can have two children only if both parents are only children. The hope is that this reform leads to a broader overhaul of China's restrictions on families.

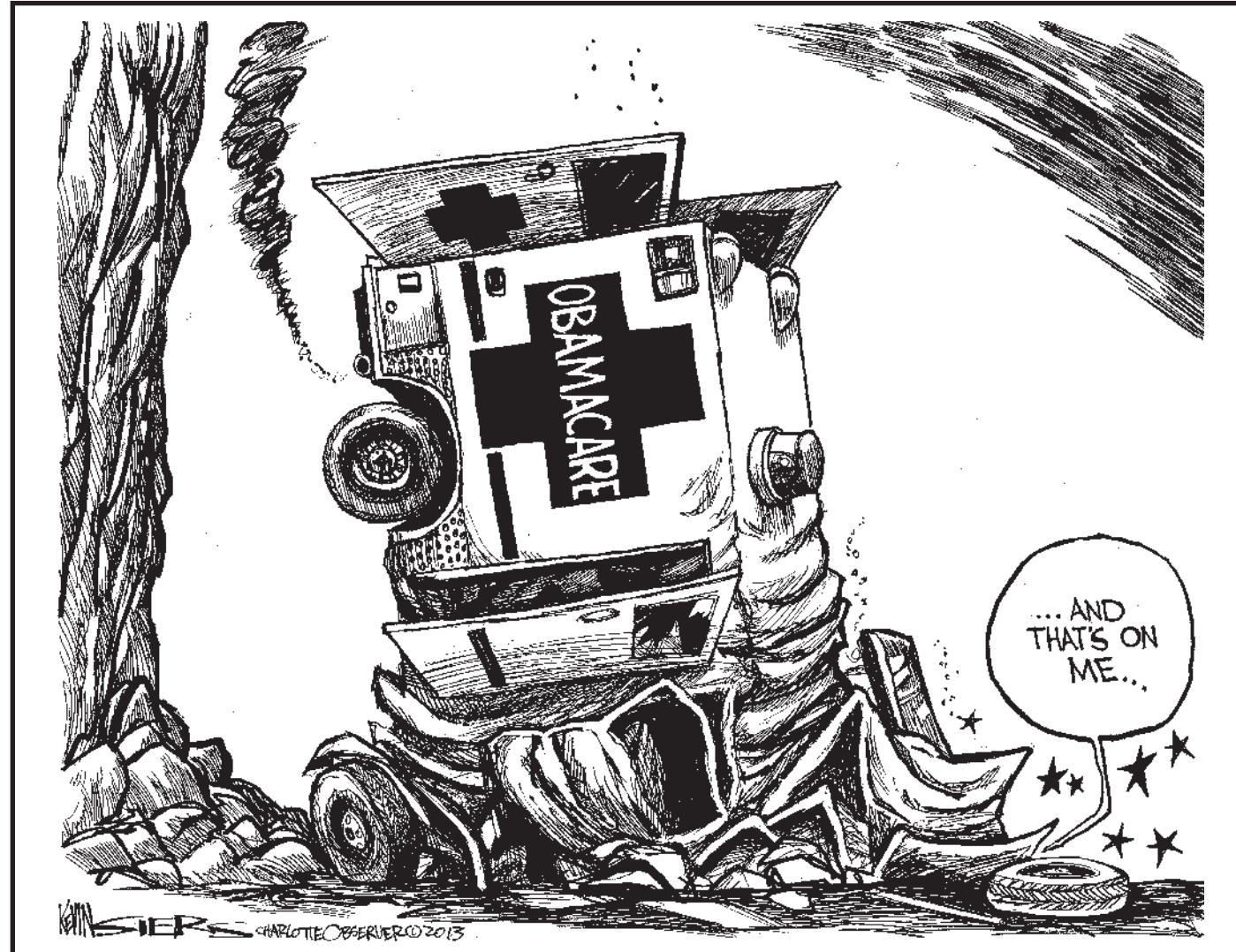
The re-education camps have been around since the 1950s. In the West, dissent is a vital part of the democratic process. Those in power listen and learn from criticism. In China, criticism of the Communist regime is treated as tantamount to a crime. Abolishing re-education camps is a first step toward freedom of speech.

Economically, Chinese leaders appear interested in stimulating private investment. For example, they propose letting private investors with enough capital set up banks. The country is also aiming to create a deposit insurance system to protect bank depositors.

From a U.S. perspective, the more that China liberalizes its economy, the more it creates vibrant markets. Obviously, some of that has already happened. But a more open China will synchronize more closely with the international economy. That boosts Americans' investment confidence and helps make the political relationship less tenuous.

If that happens, Texas companies, and others in the U.S., will be more willing to take risks in China. The reforms themselves have yet to take place, but at least China is making the right noises.

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Black Friday

I came to Shenyang Aerospace University in 2011 after I lectured on developmental economics to Chinese and third world students, eliciting an invitation to teach. Most of the foreigners were from Africa where I went in the early '80s until I picked up malaria in Ijede by Lagos lagoon in Nigeria, cutting short a scheduled training event that was to proceed to Zambia, and then a prolonged stopover at a network of development projects in Kenya.

Halfway into the semester, the university wanted me to teach more econometrics. Having perused all the algebraic equations students did not need to learn but are forced to study and memorize because academics and the expensive textbooks say so, while the practicing economists do not even bother, I wanted to quit the gig.

However, the school needed students to learn how to speak English. Most had sat through an average of 10 years of English training but were unable to speak. Having dug deeply in the pedagogy of language learning at the rural village and urban ghetto level, I took on the challenge confident that I might know a thing or two on methods.

Now, I have Chinese students in the economics department majoring in finance as well as marketing, with some in tourism, which requires them to learn how to draft ad copies for print and broadcast. I do not teach any formal economic subjects, but I do use as a context the current situation of a new China that has turned to domestic consumption to fuel and balance its robust export-oriented economy.

Just for the sake of talking, I run an exercise with my class on what they would save if they found the price of an item of interest at the local department store lower by 50 percent than previous offering; say, a previous bag at ¥100, now selling for ¥50. Students then come up with reasons and the students usually repeat phrases picked up from textbooks like "supply and demand," "opportunity cost," "comparative advantage," and "incentives."

The point is to get the students talking in English, and the show-offs generally do. I then push them into the "practical and realistic" realm, and they temper their ideas a bit, but seldom does anyone raise the fundamental question of whether a "savings" in fact occurs.

Close to the tail end of the class, I then make my pontifical pronouncements. If in the supply-and-demand scale, a consumer needs the item but deferred previously from purchase due to other priorities, or had wanted the item but thought it to be too expensive, or has the money and thinks the bargain is a good deal, the consumer still pays 50 RMB that s/he would not normally spend. So, in the transaction, there is no such thing as a "savings." The consumer spends, s/he pays for an item!

That's when we segue into the word of advertising and marketing where the object is to make someone feel they either suck if they do not purchase an item, or if they do, made to feel inadequate when they

By JAIME VERGARA

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara is a resident of Saipan teaching at the Shenyang Aerospace University in China. His email is pinoy-panda2031@aol.com.



purchase the bargain item rather than the "real" thing. In either case, advertising makes you feel unfulfilled until you "shop till you drop!"

We recently witnessed where this ethos leads to; it is lamentable. In Honolulu, rental of storage places is a growth industry. Not only do folks haul their full garbage disposal bins once a week to the curb, they also rent places to store items they seldom or no longer use but are habitually accustomed to hoard. In many suburban neighborhoods, the garage is turned into an extra room, usually a storage place, which is no big deal in tropical Hawai'i where the car can stay parked outside all year (unless the home owners' association says it is a "no-no") but in temperate zone, that congests city streets badly.

Consumerism being a stated policy in China since 2008, and getting double downbeat in 2012, the admonition to be perpetual shoppers has gone off the charts. That's how "black Friday" got into our students' vocabulary. It is a term coined not too long ago by U.S. merchants and it symbolizes the influence of American promotions and marketing practices in China's economy.

Black first referred to the pandemonium in traffic that happened the first day of Christmas shopping on the Friday after Thursday's Thanksgiving Day, once a solemn religious tradition. It has since slipped from the Parson's guidance to the directors of many Chambers of Commerce. In some shops, it is the beginning of their annual raison d'être where merchandizing is profitable until shortly after New Year's day.

Bleak "black" became the desired "black" in accounting where an investment finally makes profit. Black Friday sales' events in some department stores do not even wait for the sunrise. They stay open while the turkey is being deboned, and a mad rush occurs shortly thereafter.

Since we in the United States have exported the lifestyle of perpetual debt and easy credit access to be emulated by the rest of the world, allowing financial institutions and stock market gyrations to determine the dance steps of our lives, Black Friday is globally making the rounds 24-hours this day. Fellow Americans dance to the music with gusto.

I am staying home.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Santa, 2013

Santa and I have pulled together our list for the year, and it covers a wide spectrum of items and interests. As I reach for the wrapping paper I'll mention a few highlights for the sake of discussion. I also like to note this stuff because it casts some context for closing out the year, as I reflect on what people have been doing and thinking about.

For the thinkers among kith and kin, one book I'm giving is *Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder* (Random House, 544 pages, \$30).

The author, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, is a mathematician who earned his chops in the unforgiving, bare-knuckle world of financial speculating. This is a brainy book but it's a fun read and superbly written.

This isn't the first you've heard of Taleb in this space. I've recommended another one of his books, *Fooled by Randomness*, a time or two.

If you are looking for a soothing book full of warm fuzzies, trendy slogans, and mushy equivocation, this ain't it. Taleb is brash and iconoclastic, which is a nice change of pace from today's abundance of unctuous weasels.

Antifragile delves into the nature of risks and rewards, and describes how the vicissitudes of randomness and time can make us (or anything else) stronger or weaker. Much of the book concerns financial and economic contexts, but medicine, biology, and philosophy get some play here as well.

One theme is the illusion of safety that people get when they become insulated from risks, which, paradoxically, puts them in an ultimately more vulnerable (fragile) position, since that insulation has removed their ability to react to the environment.

On major federal regulations

As we navigate our dizzying dysfunctional relationship with the feds, there emerge dark clouds of some 106 major federal regulations from the Obama administration. These measures are being crafted for implementation throughout the country, including the NMI over the next year.

Known as the "administrative state" or "regulatory state," the authority to make public policy is unlimited, centralized, and delegated to unelected federal bureaucrats. The policies crafted aren't subject to congressional oversight or judicial review.

Congress simply emasculated itself of its lawmaking authority, a violation of the basic constitutional principle limiting legislative power to elected members and not appointed bureaucrats. There are various agencies throughout the federal bureaucracy: executive agencies, executive departments, federal departments and independent regulatory commissions.

The disturbing aspect of this contemporary trend in Washington is the massive powers the various agencies have over national policy in what's known as the "fourth branch." It combines the powers of the three branches and pens regulations without due regard to the views and opinions of citizens. What happens to the constitutional foundation of a "government for the people, by the people and of the people?"

Our Washington office can't ignore the 106 impending regulations. It must work the clock so it shares it with "we the people". It's substantive issues we need to explore to the hilt!

Costly programs merit review

Whenever a Trojan horse (freebie) is found, Kilili brings it here with official announcement that more goodies are on the way. We meet it with a full round of applause. We accept it grandly without critical review what the programs are all about headed into the future.

For instance, we applaud the reported \$150 million for Medicaid and the economic multiplier effects it would bring to the islands. While it's available for expenditure it's tacitly accepted as a positive thing. Is it really?

If I may illustrate a point based on a study by a highly credible foundation: "Virginia's Medicaid expansion is estimated to cost the

Among my pals, this is the "must have" gift because it's the "must read" book.

For the travelers on my list, I've found that the Pimsleur audio courses are a welcome gift. Their "basic" courses have a street price of around \$20 for a set of five CDs if you shop around. Each CD holds two 30-minute lessons. Twenty bucks is doggone cheap for a travel tool, that's just magazine and bubble gum money at the airport bookstore.

I really wish I found these courses a long time ago, they would have made life a lot easier.

For the sake of context, I'll note that the "comprehensive" Pimsleur courses are several hundreds of dollars. A basic course is just the earliest lessons from a comprehensive course, so it's painless to "upgrade" to the more ambitious fare if the need arises. That's what I did in Mandarin, and I recently started the basic course in another language just to keep life interesting.

The Pimselur line offers an abundance of options in any given language, so it requires careful attention while shopping. They also sell versions that can be downloaded as MP3 files, but I haven't messed with those so I can't offer any insights.

I think the key is getting enough of the language under your belt so that people are willing to help you. Pimsleur is a good resource for this. I usually buy this stuff on Amazon.com, and I'll note that Pimsleur.com is the company's direct website.

For the practical and fix-it people in my life, I'm taking the small road this time around, particularly since modern cars have a diminishing list of things that normal people can maintain and repair. Most of the items that we can service are small tasks. For these tasks a 1/4-inch drive socket set is handy to have around. I think that's an

ideal gift for the realities of modern cars. I can't generalize about costs, since it all depends on what brand you like and how much trouble you're willing to invest in finding it in Saipan.

On the fun side of things, I've noted that many old TV series are available on DVD collections. I'm not a TV savant, so I can't say anything brilliant here. Well, you know me; I can't say anything brilliant anyway.

But I noticed that some of this TV stuff goes pretty far back. For example, a series called the *Twilight Zone*, which ran from 1959 through 1964, is available on DVD collections with prices ranging from \$16 to over \$100, depending on what's in the collection.

But that's just one example of many. If you wind up stuck for a gift, maybe there's something in the DVD collection realm that will solve the problem.

We're traveling for Thanksgiving and I noticed that many major retailers are having sales on Thanksgiving Day, so the famous Black Friday is being one-upped. I never thought I'd spend Thanksgiving in a store, but I'm going to give Santa a call and we'll see where our list stands.

By ED STEPHENS

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed at EdStephensJr.com. His column runs every Friday.



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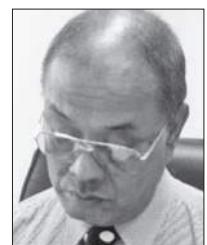
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By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



nana reverted to the comfort zone once more after the relief entered the fold. We continue feeding an old power generation system sinking at the base ready for inclusion in the NMI museum of arts. If anything, the costly system needed replacement and relocation with renewable energy technology more so than ever before.

But it seems the arcane system remains the crown jewel of incompetency so glorified and slapped with Band-Aid solutions every so often. Either we know what it would realistically take to resolve an impending power failure or aren't necessarily adept at "planning for" the future.

Indeed, we see investment of interests as though they'd pop up everywhere like wild *tañgantañgan* ignoring that each facility will need reliable and sufficient power to operate. Even hotels throughout the island aren't even hooked to the grid because of a deficiency in the system. And we're taking forward leaps ahead of our shadows? How about getting our ducks in order first?

My kanaka friend once chimed, "Many problems braddah!" Couldn't agree more though not even sure what's the pathology inherent in the obvious disregard to move the needle of growth forward. There's just sheer apathy on urgency. As we dilly-dally with time, the hardship downstairs is hardened and cemented further forcing the multitude to pine for divine intervention.

■ ■ ■

Why do public officials continue traveling (at our expense) when this government is basically bankrupt? Appalling the little sense of appearance and the bottom line. Call it sheer arrogance!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A murky proposition

Alexander Sablan's letter titled "Times have changed" is a good platform to begin the discourse on "equal" and "equality." These words by themselves do not mean anything. And, so Mr. Sablan's reference to his assertion believing that "all men are created equal" is a flawed thinking. In reference to the language that all men are created equal appeared in the pre-

amble of the "Declaration of Independence." Benjamin Franklin amended an earlier proposition by Thomas Jefferson which resulted in the final language: "all men are created equal." This was never meant as such from its plain reading, the principals were only making a political statement to the monarchy in England. Thomas Jefferson was a huge slave owner in the South. So, it was not the case as we would interpret this phrase in modern time. But many self-ordained scholars in the NMI would labor in futility trying to clarify such a term in murky

proposition. To make sense, the question is really: Equal to what? Equality of what? Much of what will result is a personal demonstration of irrationality and ignorance on the subjects. Humanity has been baffled and confused on these matters since the time of Plato and Aristotle. And, Mr. Ambrose Benette is no better source to seek clarification either.

Francisco R. Agulto

Kanat Tabla, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.pr.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 87° ▼ 77°	▲ 87° ▼ 77°	▲ 86° ▼ 77°	▲ 85° ▼ 77°	▲ 87° ▼ 77°

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 79
Palau	Sunny	▲ 87 ▼ 76
Yap	Sunny	▲ 89 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 76
Majuro	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲ 71 ▼ 63
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 52 ▼ 27
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 55
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲ 83 ▼ 69
London	Cloudy	▲ 48 ▼ 42
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲ 68 ▼ 49
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 77
Melbourne	Showers	▲ 62 ▼ 49
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 74 ▼ 66
New York	Windy	▲ 34 ▼ 26
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲ 53 ▼ 41
Paris	Cloudy	▲ 48 ▼ 43
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲ 49 ▼ 38
Rome	Sunny	▲ 55 ▼ 43
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲ 52 ▼ 35
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲ 68 ▼ 50
Seoul	Sunny	▲ 41 ▼ 31
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 58 ▼ 39
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲ 38 ▼ 29

Tides

Sunrise/Sunset

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:26 AM	5:44 PM	Today	2:26 AM	2:33 PM
Saturday	6:26 AM	5:45 PM	Saturday	3:21 AM	3:19 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	5:45 PM	Sunday	4:18 AM	4:10 PM
Monday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM	Monday	5:18 AM	5:05 PM
Tuesday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM	Tuesday	6:21 AM	6:05 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

■ ISLAND SNAPSHOT

Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

■ BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

■ BUSINESS

Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

■ SAMUT SARI

Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

■ TRAVELOGUE

Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

■ CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
 - Fax: (670) 235-3740
 - Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 2, 2013

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5038	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA5078	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA5072	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	1:35pm	2:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7
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ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	2:40pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7
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SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	11:25pm	2, 6 via NRT
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SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	1, 4, 5, 7
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SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
D2102	2:20am	5:50am	3
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
DL203/473	3:30am	7:20am	4, 7
D2104	2:00pm	5:30pm	6
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
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SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	4:10am	8:00am	1, 5
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SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR**Violating the constitution**

Stealing people's hard earned past is making it hard to live in the present.

For the information of all who may be asking, like many others who had asked me about the constitutional violation I filed with the District Court, and to better understand my complaint against Gov. Eloy Inos, one must read the actual constitutional language and purpose, as set forth below:

NMI Constitution, Article III, Section 20a reads "Membership in an employee retirement system of the Commonwealth shall constitute a contractual relationship. Accrued benefits of this system shall be neither diminished nor impaired."

The purpose of our NMI Retirement Fund program "is to provide retirement security and other benefits to government employees, their spouses and dependents, and former governors and former lieutenant governors, and to provide for an actuarially sound, locally funded pension system pursuant to the Agreement of the Special Representative of Future United States Financial Assistance for the Northern Mariana Islands and in accord with constitutional provisions protecting the rights of government employees."

It is very obvious Gov. Eloy Inos has violated our Constitution and laws. He, however, is in painful denial. Although he admitted that he "has been through several events that brought [him] close to experiencing a constitutional crisis," he created an unforgivable retirement fund crisis. Excuse me governor, our constitutionally created NMI Retirement Fund is already experiencing constitutional crisis because of you! Your failure and the failure of the NMI Retirement Fund officials to ensure an actuarially sound retirement program, is stealing people's hard earned past. For many years, government employees worked so hard to secure a lifelong pension to sustain them

when they reach their golden years and support themselves throughout their lives. You now made it very hard for retirees to live in the present.

Why are those sworn to protect and defend our constitution and laws not even doing a darn thing about the constitutional violations by the present governor! Is the AG also in denial? Is the public auditor not aware? Why is it that only Congresswoman Janet Maraita and a couple members of the 18th Legislature are pushing to appeal the issue of constitutional violations in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals?

Governor Inos is so wrong to believe that "we have reached a point of political maturity" because we have not! How can he lie to us that we reached political maturity when our constitution is being violated beyond recognition by the very people we elected and sworn to protect our constitution and laws?

How could governor Inos be so negligent in agreeing for the CNMI to pay Betty Johnson's legal fees without first knowing and negotiating how much the legal fees would be? His negligence is the same as him giving a blank check with his signature to a crook. The Betty Johnson class counsel filed with the District Court asking the CNMI to pay \$40 million in legal fees. Just a few days ago, Betty Johnson class counsel filed again additional legal fees of \$1,133,734.26 billing the CNMI. When is this madness going to stop? Is this what we can refer to as a prudent and responsible Governor? I don't think so. It is highway robbery!

For naysayer Maniakis who continues to hide behind a computer, come to Jesus and let's have coffee because *gaige ha'yu*.

Jesus I. Taisague
Koblerville, Saipan

DPH Immunization Program

- Hepatitis B virus attacks the liver and infection may develop into serious liver problems.
- Hepatitis B is the common cause of chronic liver disease in the CNMI.
- Chronic liver disease is marked by the gradual destruction of liver tissue over time.

The CNMI Division of Public Health and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, are conducting a

Hepatitis B Serosurvey

among first grade children to see if they are protected against hepatitis B.



The survey will be performed on school campuses and will consist of a **FINGER PRICK** similar to that of a blood sugar test. This small sample will be taken and tested for Hepatitis B. All test results will be kept strictly confidential and this survey will greatly benefit the CNMI by providing important information on how common hepatitis B infection is for our children.



So please have your first grade child participate in this survey to know if your child is **PROTECTED** against Hepatitis B Virus infection.

For more information please contact Public Health Immunization Program at 236 8745.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

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2013 CLEARANCE

NISSAN	STOCK #	Color	Discount	FORD	STOCK #	Color	Discount	HONDA	STOCK #	Color	Discount
Sentra S	DL7079 SOLD	Blue	\$3,000.00	Fiesta S	DM222 SOLD	White	\$2,500.00	Fit Sport	DC035133	Gray	\$2,500.00
Altima SV	DC2777 SOLD	Blue	\$3,000.00	Escape S	DUD463 SOLD	Blue	\$3,000.00	Fit Sport	DC0541 SOLD	Black	\$2,500.00
Altima S	DC105892	White	\$3,000.00	Escape S	DUD467 SOLD	Green	\$3,000.00	Civic LX	DH5598 SOLD	Brown	\$2,500.00
Rouge SV	DW0351 SOLD	Silver	\$2,000.00	F 150 XL	DFC307 SOLD	White	\$3,000.00	Civic LX	DE0507 SOLD	Gray	\$2,500.00
Frontier S 4WD	DN725699	Silver	\$3,000.00	E-150 XL Van	DDA57852	White	\$3,000.00	Civic Si Coupe	DH7024 SOLD	Orange	\$3,000.00
Murano SL	DW211529	White	\$3,000.00	Transit Connect	DT173377	White	\$2,000.00	CR V LX	DL0236 SOLD	White	\$3,000.00
Xterra S 4WD	DN810750	Gray	\$3,000.00	KIA	STOCK #	Color	Discount	CR V LX AWD	DL0212 SOLD	Brown	\$3,000.00
Pathfinder S 4WD	DC676044	White	\$4,000.00	Sportage EX	D74859 SOLD	Blue	\$2,000.00	CR V EX	DL0222 SOLD	Blue	\$2,000.00
Maxima SV	DC8160 SOLD	Silver	\$4,000.00	Sportage EX	D74859 SOLD	Blue	\$2,000.00	Accord LX	DA2241 SOLD	Silver	\$3,000.00

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card authorization, or cashier check,
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sent thru Freedom Air/ SN-5.

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(CMU)	6" - \$0.88/pc	
	8" - \$0.98/pc	
#4 REBAR		
\$800.00/BUNDLE		
#3, #5, #6, #7, #8 REBAR		
\$810.00/ST		
MADE IN KOREA		
THIN-SET MORTAR	JOINT COMPOUND	
\$7.80	\$21.00	
ELECTRICAL PIPE		
1/2"	\$2.40 3/4"	\$2.90
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Citizenship for aliens or what?

Editor's Note: Due to its length, the following letter is being published in three parts. This is the second part.

I am sure locals truly appreciate the alien workforce and what they have contributed to the CNMI. But the locals do not owe the alien workforce a vote in government that will surely outnumber the locals—that was never part of the deal to work here so let's be real about this. FYI, to those who think the Legislature should be ashamed for creating a resolution, the members of the Legislature were elected by locals to represent, serve, and protect

all U.S. citizens, not to promote alien workers. I want to pinch their *dagans* for ignoring the people's decision and creating that casino bill and acting like they don't work for mainland citizens, but I must commend them for the resolution. There is also nothing derogatory with the title of an alien worker and no one ever complained about that title until now when citizenship is on the table—some nerve. Furthermore, the alien workforce was paid for their contributions so there is no debt and allegiance to citizenship was not part of the contract.

The Filipino people are truly great Filipino citizens, not U.S.,

who work hard to send money back home to help their families, which is a quality I truly admire. But at the same time they are occupying jobs that our children are needing now and there is the real potential for the Filipino people to outnumber the locals when it comes to voting—so locals are afraid for their political future and rightfully so. Our delegate choose on his own to go out on this limb by himself as we the people did not get a chance to say anything—now people see why Kilili didn't want a polling system. But if he was smart and truly for the people he would have instituted a polling system himself instead

of saying he didn't need one. Well, he was right for him but wrong to the people because it was the people who needed the polling system to tell him what to do and what not to do—now we see the proof as time continues to be on my side.

As for the racism, I fought to end racism in America and if this was about race and equality I think I would know. If we look at the true intent, which was to come here and work, then why are we even hearing citizenship? I have a lot of Filipino friends and I want to help them as much as I can to stay here but I refuse to stand by and watch the majority voting power of

governing be transferred to a new group of people overnight. So I ask the Filipino community leaders to help in resolving this by asserting that you just want to stay and work with no interest in citizenship—it will do a great deal to resolve this in Washington.

I will say that our delegate did fight against bringing in so many alien workers when he was in the Legislature and the feds warned us and I even warned readers. But it's like I keep saying, time is proving to be on my side again and I can only pray that one day, as my mother use say to me, our leaders and voters will start listening when I tell them what is going to happen before it even happens because I really don't like saying I told you so like our parents use to do to all of us hard-headed children!

Prayers for all the people of the Philippines as I truly hate the timing of these discussions but it must be done.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman

Wrong analysis

This is an open letter to senators who voted to kill the Saipan casino bill. To senators Ray N. Yumul and Ralph Dlg. Torres, relocate to Tinian because your actions are more toward protecting and helping the Tinian casino industry than for the island of Saipan and the Commonwealth. To senators from Rota, look at yourselves in the mirror and ask yourselves this question, If I align my vote to Tinian senators does my island, Rota, get any economic benefit from the Tinian casino industry? Be honest and reflect on producing laws that benefit your constituents. "Laye I Kesang" (wrong analysis), the Rota senators should align themselves with the senators of Saipan, so Rota can harvest more economic benefits for its people. Look at Rota now, majority of its local population are running away from the island because of lack of economic benefits and opportunities. They move to Guam or the mainland United States where the pasture is greener than home. Rota politics should change and start aligning your leaders for the economic benefit of Saipan, Rota, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Vicente Manglona Sablan

Born on Saipan and a descendant of Rota

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



PUBLIC NOTICE

Call-a-Ride Saipan Service Now Open to the Public

Effective **Monday, December 2, 2013**, the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA) Call-a-Ride Saipan (CARS) service will include and serve other riders from the general public in need of transportation to get around the island. The Call-a-Ride Saipan is a demand-response curb-to-curb service that requires advance reservation and is a first-come first-serve transport service; however, riders with disabilities and older adults (55 and older) have priority reservation.

New Passenger Policy

Open to the Public (e.g., passengers with low income, under 55 of age, college students or any other person that needs public transportation). Children between 5 years old through 12 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Full name, physical and mailing address, primary/secondary contact numbers (residential & cellular telephones preferred) and map of residence is required upon initial reservation.

Destinations

Passengers can be picked up at any location and taken to any destination anywhere on Saipan including:

- Shopping Centers • Schools or College • Banking Institutions • Recreation or Amusement Centers
- Personal/Medical Appointments • Community Events • Jobsite • Airport

Service Hours & Dates

Call-A-Ride Saipan service is available Monday through Friday (except Sundays and Holidays) from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Service closed on Sundays and Holidays.

Reservations

To make reservations for your ride, you can call UP TO 7 DAYS IN ADVANCE. Trips are scheduled on a first-come first-serve basis. The reservation office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make reservations call (670) 664-2690 or email at HYPERLINK "mailto:cota@gov.mp" cota@gov.mp. For all other Transportation Information, please dial 511 to speak to a Transit Information Specialist.

Fares

All fares are for a one way trip or per segment

Eligible Riders: \$ 5.00

No-Show: \$ 5.00

Advance Purchase (Vouchers/PASS) Per Round Trip:

Weekly (6 Days): \$57 (savings of \$3)

Bi-Weekly (12 Days): \$108 (savings of \$12)

Monthly (24 Days): \$204 (savings of \$36)

Children under 5 years old - Free (must be accompanied by an adult)

Carry-on Baggage Policy

Carry-on packages are permitted provided they can be placed in a location where they will not interfere with the entrance, exit or free use of the aisles by passengers. They must not in any way compromise the safe operation of the vehicle or the safety of all passengers. The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority offers curb-to-curb service, however, drivers may assist with the loading and unloading of packages meeting the above criteria if the passenger so requests.

EXACT CHANGE IS REQUIRED

Drivers do not carry change

DRIVERS DO NOT ACCEPT TIPS

Please refrain from tipping the drivers



WICHE president to visit CNMI

To underscore the higher education opportunities available through membership in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Dr. David Longenecker, president of WICHE, will be on island next week to meet with local and regional leaders and to take part in the upcoming Micronesian Chief Executive Summit.

"This is a great coup for the CNMI," said NMC president Dr. Sharon Y. Hart. "Nationally, Dr. Longenecker is one of the most influential leaders in higher education and we are extremely thankful that he'll be spending some time meeting with local government, private sector, and educational leaders to discuss a variety of issues."

Prior to becoming the president of WICHE, Longenecker served for six years as the assistant secretary for postsecondary education at the U.S. Department of Education, developing and implementing national policy and programs that provided more than \$40 billion annually in student aid and \$1 billion to institutions.

Prior to that he was the state higher education executive officer (SHEEO) in Colorado and Minnesota. He was also the principal analyst for higher education for the Congressional Budget Office.

Hart noted that Longenecker was extremely instrumental during the college's successful efforts earlier this year to convince the U.S. Department of Education to continue federal financial aid for NMC's bachelor degree program participants.

"Dr. Longenecker flew to Washington, D.C. to join us in our meeting with officials



Longenecker

from the U.S. Department of Education," said President Hart. "His advocacy on behalf of the Northern Marianas College was extremely helpful during this difficult time."

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education is a regional organization that, until recently, had 15 member states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The CNMI became the 16th member of WICHE last year after considerable support from the CNMI governor and members of the legislature.

The organization works to improve access to higher education and ensure student success. Among other benefits, membership in WICHE allows

CNMI students who are pursuing their college degree to be eligible for reduced tuition rates at two- and four-year public post-secondary institutions like California State University, University of Nevada in Las Vegas, Boise State University, Washington State University, and other universities and colleges in the western U.S.

For graduate students (those pursuing a master's or doctorate degree), WICHE's "Western Regional Graduate Program" enables students to enroll in more than 250 graduate programs and pay the resident tuition rate, instead of the non-resident rate that an out-of-state student would normally pay.

Longenecker will be accompanied by Dennis Mohatt, WICHE vice president for Behavioral Health, during his visit to the CNMI. (NMC)

Chacha for Yolanda on Tinian a success

The United Filipinos Association on Tinian held its Chacha for Yolanda fundraiser last Nov. 22 at JC Café.

The event was very successful with Filipinos on Tinian, local residents, and even U.S. Marines taking part in the fundraiser.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) and Attorney General Joey San Nicolas each donated \$50 in support of the association's initiative to rally donations for victims of supertyphoon Yolanda (Haiyan), which

struck the central Philippines last Nov. 8 and leaving more than 5,000 people dead.

Even the business sector pitched in as Emily Dicang-Kwon donated \$700 that was coursing through UniFil Tinian president Rodney S. Cabarles.

Cabarles is appealing to other Tinian business owners for donations as well. Check donations are payable to UniFil Tinian. All cash donations will be deposited to ABS-CBN Foundation's Sagip Kapami-

ly account.

Chacha for Yolanda also had a King & Queen of the Night competition. The winners were the U.S. Marines' Carmelo Caputa and Marilou Dysoco of Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino. Each received a \$25 gift certificate from JC Café.

The Cha Cha dance winners, meanwhile, were Darling Ayuyu and Lovelina Saralu and each received a gift basket courtesy of Susan's Creations.

On Nov. 30, the Tinian Marianas Lions Club along with National Honor Society and prospective LEOs will hold a walk fundraiser at Tachogna Beach.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Two participants of the United Filipinos Association on Tinian's Yolanda fundraiser bust out their dance moves last Nov. 22 at JC Café.

The event coincides with the 5K fun run by the U.S. Marines. In observance of Diabetes Awareness Month, Tinian Marianas Lions Club will also give free blood pressure check and free blood sugar check to the participants of the two events.

For details, contact TMLC president Liz Hofschneider at 287-9697. After the event, Team Tinian will have a short gathering and potluck picnic for the students and volunteers.

Also on Nov. 30 at 6pm, UniFil in cooperation with CARE Club, Tinian Marianas Lions Club, and Tinian Mayor's Office will have a bingo fundraiser to benefit the victims of supertyphoon Yolanda. For details, contact Cabarles at 285-3637, Vina Hofschneider at the Tinian Mayors office (433-1802), and Vivian Hofschneider at 783-0848. (*Saipan Tribune*)



PUBLIC NOTICE

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority (COTA) wish to inform the general public that, effective Monday, December 2, 2013, it has relocated to its new office with new contact information:

Physical Address: Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority
2nd Floor, NMI Retirement Fund Building
Isa Drive, Capital Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

Office Hours: Monday to Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Mailing Address: Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority
Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

Contact Information:

- Main Line: (670) 664-2682 (COTA)
- Call-a-Ride Saipan Reservation: (670) 664-2690
- One-Call/One-Click Transportation Information Center: 511
- Faxsimile: (670) 664-2692
- Email: cota@gov.mp
- Website: www.cota.gov.mp

For Callers with Hearing & Speech Impairment Assistance, please call the Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) at : 711

To access COTA's main entrance and public parking, please proceed to the rear of the NMI Retirement Fund Building. Si Yu'u Ma'a, Oloomway and Thank you.






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Master chief's aide reconnects with roots during Guam visit

By JESSE LEON GUERRERO
JOINT REGION MARIANAS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ASAN, Guam—Chief Hospital Corpsman (FMF) Joseph Santos was able to visit his family and friends in Guam while traveling as the aide to U.S. Pacific Fleet Master Chief (AW/IDWS) Marco Ramirez last Nov. 24-27.

Santos, originally from the village of Dededo, was able to return home while he coordinated and participated in a tour of the Navy community and installations here with the fleet master chief.

"I was the first Pacific Islander to win it, and I'm from Guam," he said. "It was totally surprising and humbling."

The Sailor of the Year award recognizes individual Sailors for their achievements and for best representing their command and the Navy. At the time of his win, Santos served with Marine Aircraft Group 24 in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. His other notable achievements include the Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal.

Santos' career has taken him on deployments to Afghani-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chief Hospital Corpsman (FMF) Joseph Santos, center, is happy to be back home in Guam.

stan and Iraq, and now his job at Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) has

him visiting different places wherever the fleet master chief is needed. He is responsible for planning tours, updating all in-

formation relevant and needed for presentations and meetings, as well as acting as liaison with third parties.

Though the job is demanding, Santos said he was humbled to take on the task as the duty assignment was one he never imagined being a part of.

"It's been phenomenal," he said. "The job is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I'm taking every advantage to learn everything, soaking up the knowledge and wisdom and everything about what the fleet is and how the fleet thinks."

Santos said he is up to the task of doing everything he can for the Navy and he looks forward to where his career takes him next.

"I love it," he said. "If they could reset my time in the Navy, I'd still do it all again. I've had a really great time."



2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950



INVITATION FOR BIDS DPW/FHWA-13-IFB-009

ISLAND WIDE ROAD MARKING AND SIGNAGE UPGRADE ROUTE 305 (DANDAN) PROJECT NO. CM-NH-3000(018), SAIPAN

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Island Wide Road Marking and Signage Upgrade Route 305 (Dandan Road), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **November 15, 2013** at Pacific Quick Print & Post, located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to Pacific Quick Print & Post, is required to defray the cost of printing the package.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 3, 2013**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 18, 2013** to **Mr. Vicente C. Cabrera, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Vicente C. Cabrera, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked "DPW/FHWA-13-IFB-009". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **December 30, 2013**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **December 30, 2013**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **December 30, 2013** and must be received no later than **January 9, 2014**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, **January 10, 2014**. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m. local time, on **December 30, 2013**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations §70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than \$25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- b) Under penalty of perjury, a certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

- 1) Cash
- 2) US Gov't Securities
- 3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- 4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- 5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **One Hundred Fifty (150) working days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed according to Table 108-1 of the standard Specification for Construction of Roads and Bridges on Federal Highway Projects, FP-03

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ MARTIN C. SABLAN
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply



2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950



INVITATION FOR BIDS DPW/FHWA-13-IFB-010

ISLAND WIDE ROAD MARKING AND SIGNAGE UPGRADE ROUTE 32 (AS PERDIDO ROAD), PROJECT NO. CM-NH-3000(019), SAIPAN

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Island Wide Road Marking and Signage Upgrade Route 32 (As Perdido Road), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **November 22, 2013** at Pacific Quick Print & Post, located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to Pacific Quick Print & Post, is required to defray the cost of printing the package.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **December 10, 2013**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 23, 2013** to **Mr. Vicente C. Cabrera, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Vicente C. Cabrera, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked "DPW/FHWA-13-IFB-010". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **January 3, 2014**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **January 3, 2014**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **January 3, 2014** and must be received no later than **January 14, 2014**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, **January 15, 2014**. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m. local time, on **January 3, 2014**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section §70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than \$25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- b) Under penalty of perjury, a certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

- 1) Cash
- 2) US Gov't Securities
- 3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- 4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- 5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **One Hundred Fifty (150) working days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed according to Table 108-1 of the standard Specification for Construction of Roads and Bridges on Federal Highway Projects, FP-03

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ MARTIN C. SABLAN
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply



**COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 • Tel.: (670) 664-2375 • Fax: (670) 664-2408

**Request for Qualifications for Provision of Architect and Engineering Services
702 CIP Project Managers
RFQ14-GOV-011**

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, through the Office of Capital Improvement (collectively, "Commonwealth") are soliciting Statements of Qualifications from architects and engineers to provide project manager services for designated federally funded projects.

The Commonwealth has current needs for project manager services and is anticipating additional requirements during part of 2013 and 2014 calendar years. Specific project assignments are dependent upon needs of the Commonwealth and may include oversight of project planning; permitting; design; construction activities; and closeout.

Selected architects and engineers ("Project Managers") will be retained as independent contractors under the general supervision of the Contracting Officer or his designee. Project Managers will act as agent of the expenditure authority on assigned capital projects to ensure that identified objectives are achieved within cost; time; and legal requirements; while maintaining effective stakeholder communications. Selected Project Managers will be retained on a one-year contract with an option to renew for an additional year at the discretion of the Commonwealth.

Compensation for project manager services will be determined based on the required project management services for each assigned project and may include approved staff and expenses. The Commonwealth will negotiate with selected Project Managers to determine the required scope of services for assigned responsibilities. Individuals or firms selected to serve, as project managers would be precluded from providing any other services associated with the assigned project.

Interested parties may pick up the applicable scope of work and submittal requirements ("Scope of Work and Submittal Requirements") at the Office of Capital Improvement, Juan A. Sablan Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, beginning November 5, 2013 during working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Monday through Friday, except on holidays). Submittal of all qualifications must precisely follow the submittal requirements identified in the Scope of Work and Submittal Requirements.

Selection of individuals for the provision of services shall be guided by the Commonwealth Department of Finance Division of Procurement & Supply, Procurement Regulations § 7070-30.3-305. Three copies of qualifications should be submitted to the Commonwealth Division of Procurement & Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950 in a sealed envelope marked "Project Manager Qualifications RFQ14-GOV-011" no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, December 2, 2013.

Statements of Qualifications will be evaluated and scored based on the following factors:

1. Past experience as a project manager – 70%
2. Interview – 30%

Interviews will be conducted with the individuals who are determined to have the most appropriate qualifications for the needs of the Commonwealth. Architect and engineering firms may submit qualifications, however, they must identify qualifications of specific individuals who are to be considered for the provision of these services and evaluation of qualifications will be based on the experience, references, and interview of the designated individual.

This project is funded through grants from the United States Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) with local matching funds. Contract award is contingent upon approval from DOI.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any non-material imperfections in any proposal if, in its opinion to do so would be in the best interest of the government. All submitted documents shall become the property of the Commonwealth.



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**INVITATION TO BID
ITB14-GOV-015**

Autoclave Unit for Tinian Health Center

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, are soliciting sealed bids for the Purchase of Autoclave Unit for the Tinian Health Center. The project package will be available Friday, November 1, 2013 at the Governor's CIP Administrator's Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill. A \$25.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on November 19, 2013 to Ms. Elizabeth Balajadia of the Capital Improvement Program, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 664-2408.

Sealed bids must be marked "ITB14-GOV-015". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. Saipan local time, November 29, 2013. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. Saipan local time November 29, 2013, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than November 29, 2013 and must be received no later than December 6, 2013. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 1:00 a.m. Saipan local time, December 6, 2013. However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will open at 1:30 a.m. Saipan local time, on November 29, 2013.

Bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen percent (15 %) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIA Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price greater than \$25,000.00.

Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P & S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

- Acceptable asset are only:
- 1) Cash
 - 2) US Government Securities
 - 3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
 - 4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
 - 5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is sixty (60) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) one hundred dollars (\$100.00), or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by sixty (60) calendar days, the contract time and will be assessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ELOY S. INOS, Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

/s/Herman S. Sablan, Director
Procurement and Supply, DOF



**COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

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**INVITATION TO BID
ITB14-GOV-014**

Replacement of Air Conditioning Units for PDO and Arts Council Office

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, are soliciting sealed bids for the Replacement of Air Conditioning Units for Office of the Public Defender and DCCA - Arts Council Office.

The project package will be available on or after November 1, 2013 at the Governor's CIP Administrator's Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill. A \$25.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on November 19, 2013 to Ms. Elizabeth Balajadia of the Capital Improvement Program, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 664-2408.

Sealed bids must be marked "ITB14-GOV-014". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. Saipan local time, November 29, 2013. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. Saipan local time November 29, 2013, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than November 29, 2013 and must be received no later than December 11, 2013. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. Saipan local time, December 12, 2013. However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will open at 10:30 a.m. Saipan local time, on November 29, 2013.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen percent (15 %) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIA Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price greater than \$25,000.00.

Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P & S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable asset are only:

- 1) Cash
- 2) US Government Securities
- 3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- 4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- 5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is sixty (60) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) one hundred dollars (\$100.00), or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by sixty (60) calendar days, the contract time and will be assessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ELOY S. INOS, Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

/s/Herman S. Sablan, Director

Procurement and Supply, DOF



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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM- OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

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**INVITATION TO BID
ITB14-GOV-019**

REPAIRS, RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS OF THE TINIAN HEALTH CENTER

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofsneider, are soliciting sealed bids for the Repairs, Renovation and Improvements of the Tinian Health Center (THC), San Jose Village, Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project package is available at the Governor's CIP Administrator's Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill. A \$100.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference/Site Visit for this project at the project site on **December 06, 2013 at 9:00 a.m., local time**. Bidders are encouraged to visit the site to familiarize themselves with the site conditions prior to submitting their bid. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 13, 2013** to Ms. Elizabeth Balajadia, Project Manager at balajadiae@zmail.com, or to the Capital Improvement Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Fax Number (670) 664-2408. Responses to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Sealed bids must be marked "ITB14-GOV-019". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **10:00 a.m., local time, December 24, 2013**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **10:00 a.m., local time, December 24, 2013** and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **December 24, 2013** and must be received no later than **January 06, 2014**. Failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at **10:00 a.m., local time, January 07, 2014**. However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will open at **10:30 a.m., local time, December 24, 2013**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid bond of fifteen percent (15 %) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be a Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". Surety companies must hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the CNMI Attorney General.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- b) Under penalty of perjury, a certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P & S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

- 1) Cash
- 2) US Government Securities
- 3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- 4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- 5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this

Delta wins Business Travel News Survey for 3rd straight year

» Corporate travel managers vote Delta top airline for third year in a row

Corporate travel managers rated Delta Air Lines (NYSE: DAL) No. 1 in this year's Business Travel News Annual Airline Survey for the third year in a row. The airline ranked first among all carriers in nine of 10 categories scoring particularly high in key areas of the survey including: Value of Relationships with Account Managers and Sales Representatives; Quality of Airline Communications; and Networks, Airline Partnerships and Frequencies.

Earning the top ranking for the third consecutive time puts Delta among a select group to garner the survey's highest honor in three consecutive years during the survey's 16-year history. The latest endorsement from the nation's top travel managers continues the

momentum Delta has built as the industry's preferred airline. "Being acknowledged by our corporate customers for the hard work and commitment of our 80,000 worldwide employees is among the most important recognition we can receive," said Ed Bastian, Delta's president. "We've fostered a culture of unrelenting continuous improvement to the travel experience and we are committed to providing our customers with an unparalleled level of global service."

"We congratulate Delta for being selected by the Business Travel News subscribers to once again receive our highest honor in this year's Annual Airline Survey," said Tim Reid, vice president—Group publisher, The BTN Group. "Delta's

performance in the annual survey clearly demonstrates that the efforts of Delta people over the last several years continue to be recognized by industry professionals across all survey categories."

The No. 1 ranking in the BTN Annual Airline Survey further validates Delta's industry leadership in exceeding customer expectations by being the first U.S. airline to allow customer use of portable electronic devices below 10,000 feet, introducing in-flight Wi-Fi five years ago, the Sky Deck at Delta Sky Clubs in New York-JFK and Atlanta this year, being the only U.S. domestic carrier to offer personal, on-demand entertainment at every seat on all long-haul international flights by the end of 2013 and offering full flat-bed seating with direct-aisle access across its international wide body fleet by mid-2014.

Delta's operational performance data as tracked by the U.S. Department of Transportation through September 2013 illustrates its industry-leading efforts among major domestic carriers. In four of the top reported categories, Delta is top-tier in on-time arrivals, completion factor, baggage handling and customer complaints.

The BTN Survey is voted on by corporate travel managers, who are key influencers of business travel decisions. Participating airlines surveyed include American, Southwest, United and US Airways.

Since 2010, Delta has invested billions of dollars in the customer experience including installation of full flat-bed seats on Delta's wide body international aircraft, a new Terminal 4 at New York-JFK, Maynard H. Jackson Jr. International Terminal in Atlanta. Delta has also

spent more than \$100 million to expand, renovate and consolidate terminals C and D at New York-LaGuardia Airport. Additionally, customers have seen Delta's investment in its more than 50 Delta Sky Clubs throughout the system, power poles at dozens of airports, mobile apps which include features such as baggage tracking, and Wi-Fi on more than 800 aircraft.

Delta Air Lines serves more than 160 million customers each year. Delta was named by Fortune magazine as the most admired airline worldwide in its 2013 World's Most Admired Companies airline industry list, topping the list for the second time in three years. With an industry-leading global network, Delta and the Delta Connection carriers offer service to 314 destinations in 58 countries on six continents. Headquartered in Atlanta, Delta employs nearly

80,000 employees worldwide and operates a mainline fleet of more than 700 aircraft. The airline is a founding member of the SkyTeam global alliance and participates in the industry's leading trans-Atlantic joint venture with Air France-KLM and Alitalia. Including its worldwide alliance partners, Delta offers customers more than 15,000 daily flights, with hubs in Amsterdam, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York-LaGuardia, New York-JFK, Paris-Charles de Gaulle, Salt Lake City and Tokyo-Narita. Delta is investing more than \$3 billion in airport facilities and global products, services and technology to enhance the customer experience in the air and on the ground. Additional information is available on delta.com, Twitter @Delta, Google.com/+Delta and Facebook.com/delta. (PR)

Nana Yan Patgon Act signed into law

Guam Gov. Eddie Calvo yesterday signed the "Nana Yan Patgon Act" into law in support of Guam's mothers, children, and growing families.

In July, Sen. Aline A. Yamashita, PhD, penned the legislation after a young family approached her with their concerns that Guam was only one of a few jurisdictions in the nation that lacked breastfeeding statutes.

In subsequent weeks, the sen-

ator held meetings with various members of the public, private and military sectors to gather their input and expertise on the matter that would help the legislation evolve into today's law.

After receiving overwhelming support during a public hearing held in July, the Guam Legislature unanimously voted in support of Bill No. 153 during its October/November session.

"This law is the result of a

community-driven effort that produces sound legislative policy in support of our families," said Yamashita. "We all know of the scientifically-supported benefits of breastfeeding and we will see the positive affects of this on growing families today and in generations to come."

For more information, please contact the FamiliesFirst! Office at 648-3474 or email Sen. Yamashita directly at aline-4families@gmail.com. (PR)



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

This is to inform all Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)-approved Contractors (including Tinian and Rota contractors) that we are currently updating our Approved Contractor Listing for calendar year 2014. In order for NMHC to extend your company's inclusion on our listing for another year, you must submit the documentations listed below. Those companies that are not on our list of approved contractors but wish to be included are likewise encouraged to submit the following:

1. Valid CNMI Business License
2. Current Financial Statements (certified by the principle executive officer and principle financial officer)
3. 2 Years Business Gross Revenue (BGR) Tax Returns
4. 2 Years Corporate Income Tax Returns (1120)
5. Clearance Letter from the Department of Labor
6. Certificate of Compliance from the Revenue & Taxation Office
7. Workmen's Compensation Policy
8. Name of Insurance Company(ies) Currently Dealing With
9. A list of on-going/completed projects showing name of project, start and completion dates, and contract amounts
10. At least three (3) reference letters from owners of the completed projects
11. List of vendors and suppliers and at least three reference letters from them (CONSTRUCTION QUARRY, READY-MIX CEMENT & HARDWARE STORES)
12. Company background
13. Articles of Incorporation & Company By-Laws, if applicable
14. Annual Report (Registrar of Corporations)

FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE ABOVE DOCUMENTS BY DECEMBER 20, 2013 WILL RESULT IN YOUR COMPANY'S ELIMINATION FROM OUR LIST OF "APPROVED CONTRACTORS."

NMHC encourages Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MBE/WBE) to participate in this Request for Qualifications and that they will be afforded full opportunity to participate and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, or disability status.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

/S/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
CORPORATE DIRECTOR

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-14-004

AIRPORT ROAD RESTORATION FOR SAN VICENTE SERVICE AREA EXTENSION PROJECT, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Airport Road Restoration for San Vicente Service Area Extension Project, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

This work consists of excavation of flowable fill, and installation of asphalt concrete to replace pavement areas cut by CUC to install the San Vicente Service Area Extension Waterline project. Payment is only for the items completely installed and accepted by CUC and the Department of Public Works. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **30 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The Bid Package may be picked-up, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check, or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) on an electronic disk file; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **November 27, 2013 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) Original and Seven (7) Hard Copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Airport Road Restoration for San Vicente Service Area Extension Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 12, 2013**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 2, 2013** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Procurement & Supply Manager, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Yvonne Cabrera, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email yvonne.cabrera@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

CHARLES WARREN
Acting Executive Director

Business

Battle for holiday shoppers heats up

NEW YORK (AP)—This holiday shopping season, it's Amazon vs. everyone else.

The online giant has attracted customers from big store chains like Wal-Mart and Best Buy with low prices and convenient shipping. Now, stores are fighting to get customers back during the busiest shopping period of the year.

Stores are doing things like matching the lower prices on Amazon.com and offering the same discounts in stores as on their websites. For its part, Amazon is giving customers the option to pick up items at physical locations and adding Sunday delivery.

The two sides are dueling over shoppers like Jessica Danielle, a speechwriter who plans to do the bulk of her Christmas shopping on Amazon. "All the time spent going to brick-and-mortar stores, is it worth my time?" said Danielle, 31, who lives in Washington, D.C. "I don't think so."

There's a lot at stake for both sides. Amazon has built a following, but wants to grow its business globally. Meanwhile, brick-and-mortar retailers struggle to keep shoppers from using their stores as showrooms to test out and try on items before buying them for less on Amazon.

The holiday season ups the ante. Both online and brick-and-mortar retailers can make up to 40 percent of their annual revenue in November and December. And this year, they're competing for the growing number of shoppers who are as comfortable



In this March 14, 2004, file photo, a worker scans bar codes in the book warehouse area at the Amazon.com shipping and receiving facility in Fernley, Nev.

buying online as in stores.

Holiday sales are expected to rise 3.9 percent to \$602.1 billion, according to The National Retail Federation. Of that, about \$78.7 billion is expected to be online, up 15 percent from last year, according to Forrester Research.

Here's how the fight is playing out:

PRICE WAR

One of Amazon's biggest advantages is its low prices. It can charge less for everything from TVs to T-shirts because it doesn't have the high costs of running physical locations.

Last year, some retailers offered to match the lower prices that customers find on websites like Amazon during the holiday season. And this year, more have made this a policy. Best Buy even is offering to refund the difference if a customer finds a lower price after they purchase something up until

Christmas Eve. The strategy could eat into profits, but retailers hope sales will increase.

Staples is among retailers also offering the same discounts online and in stores during big shopping days like the day after Thanksgiving known also Black Friday. "We want customers to be able to shop however they want and whenever they want," said Alison Corcoran, Staples senior vice president.

SPEEDY DELIVERY

Stores had long seen their physical locations as an albatross, but now they're using them to their advantage.

"Everybody was telling me —These stores, that's really a liability that you have,"" said Hubert Joly, Best Buy's CEO. "Absolutely not. It's an asset that you have 1,000 warehouses strategically located close to the customers."

Lower gas prices lifting hopes for holiday sales

WASHINGTON (AP)—No one begs Santa Claus for cheaper gasoline. Yet falling gas prices are shaping up as an unexpected gift for drivers—and for people on their holiday shopping lists.

The average price of gasoline has tumbled 49 cents from its peak this year to \$3.29 a gallon, putting it on track for the lowest average since 2010, according to AAA. Because many Americans have had no pay raises, whatever money they're saving on gas has freed up a bit more for other purchases.

And history shows that when gas prices drop, consumers become more likely to splurge on dinners out. Impulse buys at the mall seem like less of a stretch. More people buy a gas-station

gift card after fueling up.

Many retail analysts have forecast a ho-hum sales gain of around 2 percent this year; others predict an increase of up to 3.9 percent. But steadily cheaper gas could send holiday sales shooting above 5.4 percent, analysts say.

"Every little thing moves the needle at this point," said Carl Riccadonna, senior U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank. "The benefit at this time of the year certainly helps retailers, since it is not spread evenly throughout the year."

Tom Kloza, chief oil analyst at the Oil Information Service, foresees the average price drifting down, as it typically does this time of year, to as low as \$3.05

in a conference call with reporters, administration officials said employers who want to buy marketplace plans for their workers now will need to go through an agent, broker or insurance company this year, instead of using the government website. The

administration said the plan will still allow small businesses to buy coverage but avoid slowing technical repairs to the hobbled federal online site.

Under the law, most small businesses do not have to provide coverage. But firms with 50 or more employees face a mandate to offer insurance or risk fines from the government in 2015.

Health law business insurance site delayed 1 year

CHICAGO (AP)—The Obama administration is delaying yet another aspect of the health care law, putting off until next November the launch of an online portal to the health insurance marketplace for small businesses.

The move, announced Wednesday, was needed because repairs are still underway to the troubled HealthCare.gov

website, which is the primary way for individuals to apply for insurance, and that has priority, federal officials said.

In a conference call with reporters, administration officials said employers who want to buy marketplace plans for their workers now will need to go through an agent, broker or insurance company this year, instead of using the government website. The

Nation

Obama pardons turkeys as part of annual rite

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama spared two turkeys from the brine and the oven Wednesday, fulfilling the annual tradition of a presidential pardon for a couple of lucky birds ahead of Thanksgiving Day.

Obama pardoned Popcorn, who shared the stage with the president on the North Portico of the White House on a cold, drizzly day. An alternate turkey, named Caramel, also received a pardon, though it did not have the benefit of a face-to-beak meeting with the president.

"The office of the presidency, the most powerful position in the world, brings with it many awesome and solemn responsibilities," Obama began. "This is not one of them."

The two turkeys, 38-pound gobblers hatched the same day on a farm in Badger, Minn., were each up for top billing as the national Thanksgiving turkey. After an online White House crowdsourcing election, Popcorn won.

The event is usually an op-



portunity for droll commentary by the president and the kind of inside detail that the White House rarely shares with reporters.

Popcorn, the White House said, likes to feed on corn and strut to Beyoncé's "Halo," while Caramel prefers soybean meal and Lady Gaga.

Good to know.

Popcorn's victory, Obama said, proves "that even a turkey with a funny name can find a place in politics."

As for Caramel, "he's sticking around and he's already busy raising money for his next campaign," the president said.

The turkeys will be on display at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens through Jan. 6.

Presidents have spared turkeys off and on as far back as the Lincoln era, according to the White House. The first official

pardon was granted by President George H.W. Bush.

House Speaker John Boehner, meanwhile, was taking a different tack. His Twitter account was drawing attention to a CNN article on his special recipe. "Nice to see the Boehner turkey brine get attention," he tweeted.

Later Wednesday, Obama, wife Michelle, daughters Malia and Sasha, and mother-in-law Marian Robinson volunteered at a local charity—the Capitol Area Food Bank—distributing bags of sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, apples and small white boxes of the presidential M&Ms.

Obama said the family also planned to deliver a couple of turkeys to the food bank—these, not spared.

"Tomorrow, as we gather with our own friends and family," Obama said on a serious note, "we'll count ourselves lucky that there's more to be thankful for than we can ever say and more to be hopeful for than we can ever imagine."

Rain, snow hit East during the Thanksgiving rush

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)

A wet and blustery storm along the East Coast made driving hazardous and tangled up hundreds of flights Wednesday but didn't cause the all-out gridlock many Thanksgiving travelers had feared.

Many travelers marveled at how orderly and anxiety-free the airports were during what is typically one of the busiest days of the year.

One big question lingered in New York: Will high winds ground Snoopy and the other giant cartoon-character balloons at the Macy's parade on Thanksgiving Day?

The storm for the most part unleashed wind-driven rain along the Northeast's heavily populated Interstate 95 corridor from Richmond, Va., to the tip of Maine.

Emerging from the weather gauntlet was Katie Fleisher, who made it by car from Portsmouth, N.H., through rain and fog to Boston's Logan Airport

with little trouble and discovered to her amazement that the panicked, cranky crowds she expected were nonexistent.

"We thought it would be busier here. But there've been no lines, and it has been really quiet all morning," said Fleisher, whose plan was to fly to Pittsburgh.

"Our flight is still on time, but we are checking the app every couple minutes," she said. "We are nervous, as we are traveling with two 1-year-olds, and any extra time on a plane would be horrible."

The storm was expected to drop around 6 inches of snow in parts of West Virginia and western Pennsylvania and up to a foot in a pocket of upstate New York.

Damaging winds gusting up to 60 mph were expected to rip through Boston and other coastal areas.

Those winds could prevent the giant balloons from taking flight this year at the Macy's pa-

rade. Safety rules that specify wind speeds were enacted in New York after a spectator was killed in 1997 in an accident involving an out-of-control balloon.

Flight cancellations piled up at East Coast hubs. By midday Wednesday, around 250 flights had been canceled, according to the tracking website FlightAware.com.

But that was a tiny fraction of the nearly 32,000 flights that were scheduled to, from or within the U.S. on Wednesday, the site said. And the weather in many places was improving as the day wore on.

Most of the cancellations involved Newark, N.J., Philadelphia and New York's LaGuardia Airport.

The longest delays affected Philadelphia-bound flights, which were being held at their points of origin for an average of about two hours because of the weather, according to the website.

ACROSS THE NATION

Same-sex couple's wedding a first for Illinois

CHICAGO (AP)—In a short ceremony inside their Chicago apartment, two beaming brides made Illinois history Wednesday as they became the first gay couple to wed under the state's new law legalizing same-sex marriage. The law approved last week doesn't go into effect until June, but one of the women—Vernita Gray—is terminally ill with cancer, so she and her partner of five years, Patricia Ewert, were granted an expedited marriage license by a federal judge's order. The two made it official Wednesday in front of more than 20 friends at their high-rise home on the city's North Side. A Cook County judge officiated, and a close friend who deemed himself the "flower girl" tossed red rose petals and the couple kissed several times.

Ohio Amish girl, family flee to avoid forced chemo

A 10-year-old Amish girl with leukemia and her parents have fled their home in Ohio, leaving the country at one point, so that she won't be forced into resuming chemotherapy treatments, the family's attorney said Wednesday. The family has been fighting a hospital in court for months after the parents decided to halt the treatments because they were making the girl sick. They left their home in rural northeast Ohio just days before a state appeals court appointed a guardian in October to take over medical decisions for the Sarah Hershberger, said attorney Maurice Thompson. (AP)

Asia

China says it monitored defiant US bomber flights

BEIJING (AP)—China acknowledged Wednesday it let two American B-52 bombers fly unhindered through its newly declared air defense zone in the East China Sea despite its earlier threat to take defensive measures against unidentified foreign aircraft.

The U.S. flights, which tested the Chinese zone for the first time since it was declared over the weekend, raised questions about Beijing's determination to enforce its requirement that foreign aircraft identify themselves and accept Chinese instructions.

China's lack of any action suggested that it was merely playing out a diplomatic game to establish ownership over the area rather than provoke an international incident.

The flights followed days of angry rhetoric and accusations over Beijing's move, designed to assert Chinese claims to a group of uninhabited islands controlled by Japan.

The U.S. and Japan have said they don't acknowledge the zone, and Taiwan and South Korea, both close to the U.S., also rejected it.

A Chinese Defense Ministry statement said the U.S. planes were detected and monitored as they flew through the area



In this Sept. 2012 photo, the tiny islands in the East China Sea, called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese are seen.

for two hours and 22 minutes. It said all aircraft flying through the zone would be monitored and that "China has the capability to exercise effective control over the relevant airspace."

Asked repeatedly about the incident at a regularly scheduled briefing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said it had been handled according to procedures laid out in the Saturday statement but offered no specifics.

"Different situations will be dealt with according to that statement," Qin said.

The U.S., which has hundreds of military aircraft

based in the region, described the flights as a training mission unrelated to China's announcement of the zone. U.S. officials said the two unarmed B-52 bombers took off from their home base in Guam around midday and were in the zone that encompasses the disputed islands for less than an hour before returning to their base, adding the aircraft encountered no problems.

The bomber flights came after State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said China's move appeared to be an attempt to change the status quo in the East China Sea.

Leader of Thai protests says he's prepared to die

BANGKOK (AP)—A few years ago, Suthep Thaugsuban was a suit-and-tie wearing deputy prime minister of Thailand and a senior executive of the country's oldest political party.

Now, the 64-year-old career politician has ditched his office attire, distanced himself from the opposition Democrat Party and found a new calling as a street fighter.

Suthep is the mastermind of Thailand's latest round of street protests and has vowed to topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra by taking over every government ministry. After storming the Finance Ministry

earlier this week and camping there two nights, Suthep led protesters for a fourth day Wednesday in what he calls a people's power uprising.

Whistle-blowing throngs massed inside or around at least six of the government's 19 ministries, although they left half of them after a few hours. One large group led by Suthep entered a sprawling government office complex that houses the Department of Special Investigations, the country's equivalent of the FBI, and prepared to camp there overnight.

"We like peaceful methods," Suthep told reporters, his

voice hoarse from speaking above the crowd's roar. But he added, "If we don't succeed, then I am prepared to die in the battlefield."

"The people will quit only when the state power is in their hands," he said. "There will be no negotiation."

The brash threat is the boldest challenge yet to Yingluck's embattled administration, and it has raised fears of fresh political violence in the divided Southeast Asian nation.

Yingluck has repeatedly said she wants to avert violence and offered to negotiate an end to the crisis.

Afghan president softens some demands on US deal

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Afghanistan's president on Wednesday softened some of his demands on a security agreement with the United States governing the future of American troops in the country— even as concerns grew among Afghans and the country's military, which would be hard hit if his failure to sign leads to a U.S. withdrawal.

However, President Hamid Karzai still refused to commit to signing the Bilateral Security Agreement before the end of the year, a timeline that Washington says must be met to give time to prepare for American troops

to remain in the country after 2014, when most foreign forces are set to withdraw.

Karzai's reluctance to finalize the pact has perplexed many in Afghans—especially those in its military—after a national gathering convened at his request demanded he sign it.

In an interview broadcast Wednesday by Radio Free Europe, Karzai said he would sign the deal if America meets demands to not raid Afghan homes and help restart peace talks with the Taliban.

"Whenever the Americans meet these two demands of mine,

I am ready to sign the agreement," Karzai said in the interview to the U.S.-funded station.

He appears to have taken a small step back on his demand that the U.S. guarantee free and fair presidential elections on April 5 following assurances he received during a Monday meeting with U.S. National Security Adviser Susan Rice.

"They have assured me about this," Karzai said of the elections. "But I will see what happens."

A two-time president, Karzai is barred from seeking a third five-year term. His brother however is a candidate.

World

Syria, opposition both confirm presence at talks

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—

Syria's government and the head of the main Western-backed opposition coalition both confirmed Wednesday that they would participate in a U.N.-sponsored peace conference.

But the two sides laid out starkly different visions of what talks would bring: the opposition sees a transitional government emerging, while the government insists it is not going to the conference to hand over power.

The United Nations on Monday announced that the long-delayed peace talks will begin Jan. 22 in Geneva. The meeting would be the first face-to-face talks between President Bashar Assad's government and its opponents since the Syrian conflict began in March 2011. That has raised hopes that a resolution to a civil war that activists say has killed more than 120,000 people could be within reach.

Syria's Foreign Ministry confirmed in a statement that Assad will send an official delegation to the conference. The

ministry stressed that the representatives "will be going to Geneva not to hand over power to anyone" but to meet with those "who support a political solution for Syria's future."

The main Western-backed Syrian opposition group also said it is ready to attend. "We

have presented in our last coalition meeting a clear complete vision regarding going to Geneva 2 (the conference) and it was approved with the consensus of the coalition and now we are ready within this spirit to go to Geneva 2," Ahmad al-Jarba, chief of the Syrian National Coalition, told reporters.

The group had earlier indicated that it was going but also said it required confidence-building measures, including humanitarian corridors to besieged rebel areas and the release of political prisoners.

Al-Jarba reiterated the coalition's stance that it sees the conference as leading to a transitional government. The Syrian opposition and its Western supporters insist that Assad cannot be part of such a gov-

Italy Senate expels 3-time ex-Premier Berlusconi

ROME (AP)—Three-time former Premier Silvio Berlusconi was ousted from Parliament on Wednesday after two decades as a lawmaker, defiantly calling it "a day of mourning for democracy" and pledging to continue in politics.

After weeks of maneuvering, appeals and even an attempt to bring down the government, Berlusconi's delay tactics ran their course when the Senate voted to kick him out of the chamber due to a tax fraud conviction.

Ever a populist, the 77-year-old billionaire chose the piazza over the Senate floor, addressing a crowd of cheering supporters outside his Roman palazzo as the vote was under way just a short walk away.

"We are here on a bitter day, a day of mourning for democracy," Berlusconi declared. He said his political enemies—including the judiciary he accuses of mounting a campaign against him—were "toasting" his demise.

"They are actually euphoric," he said.

Berlusconi pledged to remain in politics—effectively launching a campaign in which he won't be able to stand for office—noting that other political leaders are not lawmakers.

He cited Beppe Grillo, the former comic and founder of the anti-establishment 5 Star Movement, and Matteo Renzi, the Florence mayor

who is a Democratic Party star widely tipped as a future premier candidate.

The Senate vote bars Berlusconi from running or holding office for at least six years under a 2012 law applied to anyone sentenced to more than two years in prison.

Berlusconi was sentenced to four years on a tax fraud conviction relating to the purchase of TV rights to U.S. films on his Mediaset network, charges he continues to deny. The sentence was automatically reduced to one year by a general amnesty, which he will serve

NSA spied on radicals' porn habits

LONDON (AP)—The Huffington Post cited a secret National Security Agency document that allegedly reveals the U.S. agency spied on the online sexual activity of Islamist radicals in order to find ways to discredit them.

The website said the document, leaked by ex-NSA contractor Edward Snowden, shows the organization tracked six unnamed "radicalizers" and their visits to pornographic websites. It says the alleged electronic surveillance aimed to find their "personal vulnerabilities" to undermine their credibility.

The report published parts of the document, which is dated Oct. 3, 2012, but redacted the names of the six people. It said none of the six were accused of being involved in

ernment.

In a jab at Britain and France, the Foreign Ministry said that if Paris and London "insist on holding fast to these illusions" that there is no place for Assad in a transitional period, then "there is no need for them to attend Geneva 2."

"Our people will not allow anyone to steal their right to decide their future and leadership and the main goal of the Geneva conference is to fulfill the interests of the Syrian people alone, and not those who shed their blood," the statement said.

The continued bloodletting is but one of huge hurdles that remain ahead of talks. The full list of participants also has not been decided.

Al-Jarba said his group rejects Iran's participation in the conference, unless it withdraws forces fighting on Assad's behalf. The Iranian-allied Lebanese Hezbollah group has backed Assad's troops. Iran's Revolutionary Guard has said it has high-level advisers in Syria but denied having fighters there.

either under house arrest or doing public service.

In the last election, Berlusconi's now-defunct and splintered People of Freedom Party garnered 7.3 million votes, or 21.5 percent of the vote. Berlusconi's charisma remains compelling to many Italians despite his ongoing judicial woes.

"I think for the time being he still controls a substantial number of voters," said Roberto D'Alimonte, a political analyst at Rome's LUISS University. "He hasn't lost the hardcore voters."

terror plots. It added that the NSA believes all those targeted live outside the U.S.

"Some of the vulnerabilities, if exposed, would likely call into question a radicalizer's devotion to the jihadist cause, leading to the degradation or loss of his authority," the document read.

When contacted for comment Wednesday, the NSA referred The Associated Press to a statement from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released Tuesday.

"Without discussing specific individuals, it should not be surprising that the U.S. Government uses all of the lawful tools at our disposal to impede the efforts of valid terrorist targets who seek to harm the nation and radicalize others to violence," the statement said.

Off the Wall

Dog-doo scofflaws get bagged

BRAINTREE, Mass. (AP)—Apartment and condo managers, dogged by complaints from those who've experienced the squishy and smelly sensation of stepping onto a pile of dog doo, are turning to DNA testing to identify the culprits who don't clean up after their pets.

It's the latest twist in the long-running struggle to keep canine waste off lawns, hallways, elevators and other common areas of animal-friendly community buildings.

DNA monitoring has yielded immediate and dramatic results in the condominium community of Devon Wood, where maintenance staff previously reported seeing, stepping onto or driving over several piles of droppings each week on its 350-acre property.

"We initially didn't—for a better part of a month—didn't find any waste, which just floored us," said Barbara Kansky, who manages the 398-unit condo development in the town of Braintree that introduced DNA monitoring in July.

Polite reminders, letters and notices previously failed to persuade errant pet owners to observe condo rules requiring them to clean up after their animals, Kansky said. There were problems even after residents reported seeing others failing to pick up their dog's messes.

"We would call or send a letter and that dog owner would say: 'Prove it,'" Kansky said.

So she searched online and found Knoxville, Tenn.-based BioPet Vet Lab, which specializes in testing DNA from dog poop to identify offending animals. BioPet has beefed up its staff with more scientists to meet



In this Thursday, Nov. 21, 2013 photo, Barbara Kansky, condo manager of Devon Wood in Braintree, Mass., uses a long cotton swab to demonstrate how to obtain a DNA cheek cell sample from her dog, Justine.

demand for what Eric Mayer, director of business development, calls "a booming, growing, new product," and has started distributing throughout the U.S. and into Canada, Israel and Singapore in the past two years.

The service, branded Poo-Prints, is a very simple, Mayer said.

The first step is to register the DNA of all dogs in the community by collecting samples of their cheek cells using a pair of sterile swabs, Mayer said in an email. The second is to collect a sample of feces and send it to the lab for matching.

An attorney advised Kansky that condo trustees could enforce existing condo rules by requiring all dog owners to submit their animals for collection of DNA samples. Dog owners paid a one-time fee of \$59.95 for the initial DNA testing for the database. Subsequent lab tests of dog droppings that end up identifying the offending

animal result in a \$50 testing fee plus a \$100 fine.

So far, one resident dog has been identified as an offender.

Kerry Weidner, a pet owner in Devon Wood, says the service has transformed life at the sprawling complex.

"We used to see dog poop almost every other day. You had to worry about where you walk on the grass because there was dog poop, a lot of different places," Weidner said. "Now, you don't really have to worry about dog poop. You can walk where you want, the grass is now ours again, we don't have to worry about it, and that's just a great thing."

Now, Kansky said, residents want her to solve another problem.

"We've now had people say: 'Well, now can we get them to stop having their dogs lift their legs on the shrubs?'" Kansky said, smiling. "That's a little more difficult and we are not going to tackle that."

and had tinfoil protruding from the lid, so the man considered it suspicious. The Oklahoman reports that officers told the man to leave the container outside and the police bomb squad X-rayed the item. The analysis determined that it was only a burrito. Although it was harmless, police aren't laughing at the incident. Nelson says anyone who finds a suspicious object should call authorities—not bring it to a police station themselves.

'Dolly' the wandering llama caught in Michigan

HOLLY TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)—A llama spotted wandering for nearly six months in Michigan has been captured and is getting a new home. Mlive.com reports the llama that Kathy Kuzma calls "Dolly" was found Saturday in Oakland County's Holly Township, about 40 miles northwest of Detroit. Kuzma has been on the lookout for the animal, which had been wandering her neighborhood. On Saturday, Lisa Davenport came to Kuzma's house to get a look at the llama. Davenport has three llamas of her own along with other animals at a Michigan farm. The women walked into a field to give the llama some food, and Dolly stood still instead of being her usual skittish self. They then coaxed the llama into a barn. Davenport plans to take the llama back to her own farm.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Russia outraged by giant Louis Vuitton suitcase

MOSCOW (AP)—Politicians didn't like it, the public didn't like it, so the gigantic Louis Vuitton suitcase is being booted out of Red Square. The GUM department store on Red Square, which is responsible for 30-feet (nine meters) high and 100-feet (30-meters) long construction, promised in a statement released Wednesday that it would be dismantled. Politicians and public alike condemned the exhibit, a stone's throw from the tomb of communist leader Vladimir Lenin. State news agencies reported that the Kremlin had demanded the removal of the display. The construction is part of an exhibition called "The Soul of Travel," marking Vuitton's 150th anniversary and was to open on Dec. 2. Louis Vuitton said the construction was a copy of a model owned by a Russian noble, Prince Vladimir Orlov.

OKC bomb squad says suspicious item was a burrito

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—A burrito caused a minor scare at an Oklahoma City police briefing station after a man brought the foil-wrapped object in for analysis. Oklahoma City Police Capt. Dexter Nelson says a man discovered a Thermos-type container in his lawn Thursday afternoon and brought it to a police briefing station. Nelson says the container was heavy

Science & Technology

5 shopping apps to get you the best prices

NEW YORK (AP)—Looking to save a few bucks while you shop for holiday gifts? Don't hit the mall without these shopping apps.

Many retailers, for instance, will match deals you find elsewhere, so these apps can help you find better prices to show the cashier. Some let you search for coupons, while others tell you whether you're better off buying online instead. And one keeps track of all those promotional fliers that do little good if you forget them at home.

I tested more than a dozen shopping apps—in the process getting some of my holiday shopping done early. I narrowed the list to five because using them all at once can get time consuming. You want to beat others to the best deals, after all.

Unfortunately, if you prefer to shop at mom and pop stores, you won't find any deals here. But if you don't mind big retailers, these apps offer a hefty selection of deals from them. The ones I chose are all free, easy to use and beautifully designed.

RetailMeNot (Available for Android, iPhone)

This app lets you search for coupons from your favorite stores, so you can instantly save 10 percent, 20 percent or even more on a single item or your entire shopping cart.

You can scroll through the list of hot deals on the home page or search for a specific store. You can add your favorite stores to a list to see the deals more quickly. The app uses the phone's location information to narrow the deals to the ones near you.

I'm not saying these apps are problem-free. At Toys R Us, the cashier wasn't able to scan a 15 percent off coupon. RetailMeNot says many retailers have outdated scanners, but most will honor the discount anyway. That happened at Toys R Us after the cashier called for a manager. Getting the discount took longer than expected, and some people in line behind gave me bad looks. But the deal was worth it.

The app lets you see both in-store and online deals. After walking into a Gap retail store,

Ex-Nokia engineers launch new smartphone

HELSINKI (AP)—Engineers who used to work for Nokia are hoping to grab a share of the lucrative and highly competitive smartphone market with a new handset, which is based on the former world No. 1 cellphone maker's old software and is faintly reminiscent of its recent models.

The Jolla handset's Sailfish platform has been developed from the MeeGo operating software, Nokia's last open-source platform which it abandoned in 2011 when it switched over to using Microsoft Corp.'s Windows system.

I found a coupon that works only online. So I left and went to Gap's website. RetailMeNot's 35 percent off coupon code saved me \$20.26 on a \$57.89 purchase.

If you create an account, you can browse for deals on RetailMeNot's website. Any coupons you save on the website will show up on the app. They will delete when they expire.

One annoyance: According to RetailMeNot, about a third of the coupons are uploaded by users. Employees go through them to make sure that they work, but some bad ones get through.

About a month ago, I went to Gap with a coupon that didn't have an expiration date. But after the cashier called a manager, I was told it expired a week earlier. RetailMeNot says such problems are rare. To me, the savings from this app is worth the small inconveniences.

Amazon and RedLaser (Available for Android, iPhone, Windows)

Many retailers, including Best Buy Co. Inc., Target Inc. and Toys R Us Inc., are promising to match cheaper prices you find online, hoping you'll buy on the spot and not wait until you can get to Amazon's website.

To take advantage of that, install Amazon.com Inc.'s app on your phone. You can scan barcodes of items in the retail store and see how much it costs on Amazon. If you find a better price, show the app to a cashier. I've gotten cashiers at Best Buy, Target and Toys R Us to knock off as much as \$10 on different items. The savings can add up.

The RedLaser app, which is owned by eBay Inc., searches several online retailers, giving you more chances to find better prices than if you just searched Amazon.

RedLaser doesn't search Amazon, so use both to make sure you are getting the lowest price.

Cartwheel by Target (Available for Android, iPhone)

I tried apps for several retailers, but Target's was the best. Cartwheel is easy to use and has cou-

pions for everything from electronics to toys to cereal.

You can search for coupons by category as well as "collections," such as items to help ease a cold or holiday decorations. Once you find a coupon you want to use, you tap the add button. Then present the cashier with a single barcode that has collected all the coupons you selected. These coupons don't work online, only inside Target stores.

The best part is that they can be used on top of other coupons you may find elsewhere. That can increase your savings a lot.

Flipp (Available for iPhone)

I never remember to save retailers' promotional fliers that come in newspapers, even when I come across one that's tempting to use. They're hard to carry around, and they usually end up in the trash.

The Flipp app can help. Flipp works with retailers and turns fliers digital. The digital version is identical to the paper one, and you can flip through it with a flick of your finger. You can also search by a store's name and digitally "clip" deals you want to save.

If there's a store you shop at often, you can have new fliers automatically appear.

While at Macy's, I found a flier that offered \$10 off a \$25 purchase. Several people ahead of me in line had the coupon cut out of the paper flier. I gave the cashier the coupon from the Flipp app.

You can also use the app to build a shopping list or compare prices from different stores.

Unfortunately, there's no Android version yet. The app just launched in November.

REGAL CINEMAS

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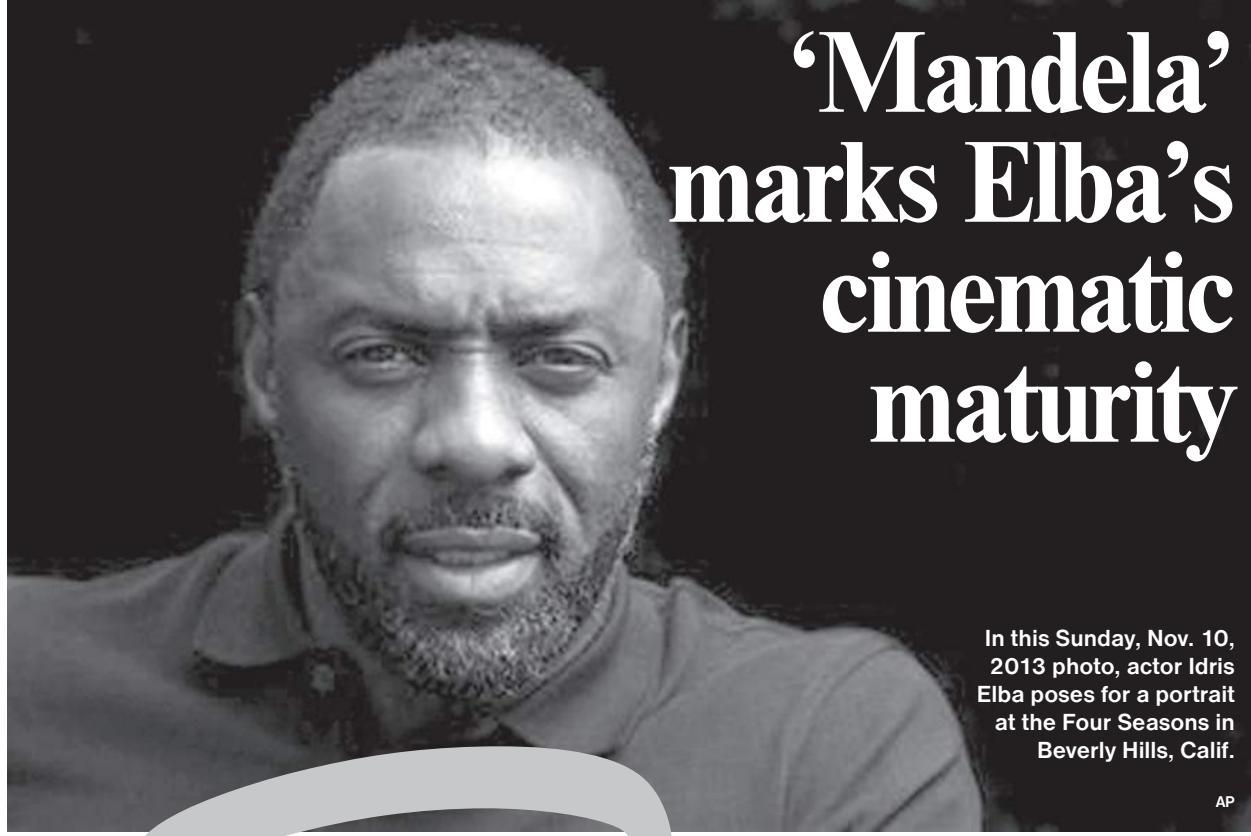
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Life & Style

'Mandela' marks Elba's cinematic maturity



In this Sunday, Nov. 10, 2013 photo, actor Idris Elba poses for a portrait at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—When portraying South African revolutionary Nelson Mandela in the biopic, "Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom," Idris Elba embraced the harsh realities of Mandela's life and was determined to stay in character even when the cameras stopped rolling.

But the British actor knew his latest movie wouldn't be believable unless his fellow actors could deliver a performance as raw as his own—so he pushed them to embrace uncomfortable realities, too.

Elba recounted one such instance when he was shooting scenes that focused on Mandela's 27 years in jail under white minority rule. During the filming, he sensed that a couple of white actors were struggling to portray the brutality in which Mandela was treated.

"They felt bad. ... I could see it in their eyes. I spoke to director (Justin Chadwick) and I said, 'I need these guys to go back to their core. If there is any sense of racism in them I need them to bring it up. If there is a black person that they don't like let me hear it and feel it,'" said Elba intently, leaning in during a recent interview in a dim Hollywood bar.

"That was important because it would come through in the performance and suddenly it becomes the biopic that's safe."

Safe would not be the word to describe Mandela the man, or the movie. While it shows him as the genial peacemaker that the world embraced when he was freed from prison and became South Africa's first black president, it also shows him as a fiery and flawed revolutionary who sought to abolish apartheid through any means necessary as leader as the African National Congress.

Chadwick called Idris brave and lauded his portrayal of Mandela.

"There are not many people who

would step into the shoes of Mandela, particularly the way I was making the movie," he said. "There was no room for any untruth. When you are standing in front of thousands of people portraying their leader that they know so well you'd better be on it, and Idris was on it."

Elba did not have a chance to speak to the 95-year-old icon because of his failing health. But he drew on the mannerisms of his late father to help him with his interpretation of Mandela. He also spoke to a few of Mandela's daughters and his second wife, Winnie, who was also a powerful figure in the anti-apartheid movement.

"Winnie said it's all good to see a guy who is waving and smiling," said Elba. "But she needed to see the complex man."

Based on Mandela's autobiography, the film, which opens Friday, has been in the works for years. Denzel Washington was the original choice for the role.

"But at some point the DNA changed and it didn't work for him to do the film, so my name was thrown in that mix," said Elba. "In actuality it was really easy to get the job, but I didn't believe that I had gotten it."

Once reality set in, so did Elba's nerves. "I was like, 'Damn, do I have this performance in me?'" the 41-year-old actor said. "Everyone knows what Mandela looks like and sounds like and I'm not like any of that. It was a massive challenge, but it was time to grow up and really put my acting chops out there."

Amidst the stormy relationship between Mandela and his first wife, Evelyn Mase, Elba was determined to depict the man beyond the saint.

"I was surprised he was such a playboy," Elba added. "But he was one of the first black lawyers in Soweto (South Africa). This was sexy. We wanted to be honest about that."

Bringing sexy to the role was likely the easiest part for Elba—considered not only a brilliant actor, but a sex symbol as well. Even President Barack Obama joked about his lure with the ladies when the White House hosted a special screening of the film earlier this month, Elba recently recounted.

"He is hugely charismatic," said "Mandela" co-star Naomie Harris, who plays Winnie in the film. "He is one of those guys who comes in and lights up a room. He's very charming and makes everyone feel special."

Elba's magnetism is one reason why he's been so popular in recent years. Besides starring in the BBC series "Luther," he's played key roles in blockbusters like "Prometheus" and the "Thor" superhero series, as well as films such as "American Gangster."

"He's incredibly versatile," said "Thor: The Dark World" director Alan Taylor. "He brings an incredible weight to everything he does. There is so much behind his eyes."

Elba's breakthrough role was as Stringer Bell in the critically acclaimed "The Wire," playing the role of the ruthless Baltimore drug dealer so authentically that some found it hard to believe he is British.

Yet when Elba arrived in New York from London in his mid-20s, he struggled to find work with his British accent. He began hanging out in Brooklyn barbershops and at barbeques in the Bronx to pick up the dialect.

"I'd talk about basketball and be right in the mix," he said. "I peeled back American culture and tried to understand it. Every moment was about rehearsing."

Hawaii investigating 'American Jungle' TV show

HONOLULU (AP)—Officials in Hawaii are investigating whether any state rules and regulations were broken during the filming of the new History channel television show "American Jungle."

The Department of Land and Natural Resources said Wednesday that an episode that aired Nov. 17 showed hunters

at night, but hunting at night is illegal on both public and private land.

The department also says the Division of Forestry and Wildlife denied the production crew's request for a permit to film on state forest lands, but maps used on the show clearly mark areas under the department's jurisdiction.

An email seeking comment was sent to representatives of History channel owner A&E Television Networks.

According to the network's website, the show depicts "clans" fighting over access to territorial hunting grounds and using knives and spears to take down prey like wild boar and goats.

Death of musical icon brings Israel to standstill

JERUSALEM (AP)—The sudden death of legendary Israeli singer-songwriter Arik Einstein brought the country to a virtual standstill Wednesday, with radio and TV stations airing nonstop retrospectives and throngs flocking to his grave to pay tribute to the father of Israeli rock.

For many, Einstein epitomized the soul of the country, representing a happier vision of Israel than the country that today is beset by divisions between rich and poor, Arab and Jew, religious and secular.

Einstein, who died of an aortic aneurysm Tuesday at 74, was also hailed as the antithesis of modern celebrities in Israel and elsewhere—an unpretentious man who lived for decades in the same small apartment in Tel Aviv, resisting big-money offers of every kind.

Although he was hardly known outside Israel, he was almost uni-

versally loved. Yosef, it was secular Jews by the thousands who filled Tel Aviv's main square where Einstein's coffin lay, an honor few receive in Israel. Many gathered there late into the night, singing his songs.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu eulogized him as a performer whose songs "accompanied us throughout all the stations of our life, in loves and disappointments, in ups and downs."

And President Shimon Peres praised him for "a sound that has hope, longing, discomfort, love—lack of exaggeration."

He was also famous for a series of TV comedy skits that poked fun at such topics as Jewish immigration, Bible study and Israel's love of soccer. His talent for accents was comedic gold in a country peopled by immigrants from all over the world.

Einstein began captivating audi-



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu places a rose on the coffin of Arik Einstein, a pioneering Israeli singer and songwriter, during his memorial service at Rabin's square in Tel Aviv, Israel, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013. AP

versally admired inside the country—a rare thing in a land with deep cultural divisions and antipathies, even among Jews.

"Every country has one. The French had Yves Montand. The Americans had Frank Sinatra. And we had Arik Einstein," said pop star Shlomo Artzi.

Aviv Geffen, another singer who worked with Einstein years ago, said he was much more than an entertainment figure.

"He was a symbol—one that we needed," said Geffen, who like many younger Israeli artists collaborated with Einstein. "He leaves us with people who are not as good."

Almost nothing else was on television Wednesday but wall-to-wall coverage of Einstein's funeral and interviews with Israelis flocking to his gravesite.

What would have normally been a celebratory day of candle lighting for the start of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah turned into a day of lighting memorial candles. A ledge outside Einstein's apartment building dripped with white wax from candles lit by fans.

In striking contrast to the outpouring of political and religious fervor at last month's Jerusalem funeral of spiritual sage Rabbi Ov-

ences as a young soldier in the army's singing group. After a successful run as an actor and comedian, he joined with two artists in 1966 to create Israel's first pop ensemble, The High Windows, and soon after released what is considered Israel's first rock 'n' roll record.

He worked with a succession of partners who themselves became staples of the music scene, and who often wrote the music to his songs. Einstein himself often wrote lyrics, but many of his tunes are highbrow Hebrew poems put to music.

His stylistic range was broad, extending from Russian-influenced soft ballads and folk songs to electric guitar-driven rock.

Among his most popular ballads are "Me and You," an optimistic song about changing the world, and "Fly, Little Nestling," interpreted as a parent's tearful tribute to a child leaving home. Both songs are favorites at American Jewish summer camps.

His voice was a soft, unadorned baritone, and his oldies resonate even with Israeli youngsters.

In his 70s, Einstein was ranked as the most widely played singer on Israeli radio, but he stopped performing live at age 42 because of a stage fright that seemed to endear him to the public even more.

One Direction to the rescue with mom-friendly LP

One Direction, "Midnight Memories" (Columbia)

What's the mother of the average American tween to do as the holidays approach? Miley has twerked her way out of the stocking, for sure. Justin Bieber invites too many questions. And most of the women of pop are exploring very adult themes that are rated at least PG-13.

One Direction steps into that giant void just in time for Black Friday, providing nervous mothers with the perfect gift: "Midnight Memories." The album is full of positive choruses and playful—not pornographic—takes on love and life. Smartly promoted around release, the third album from the British boy band is definitely mom bait.

It's a pretty good record, too. The quintet has released a lot of music in a short period of time, usually a challenge for young acts.

Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and Louis Tomlinson take baby steps forward from their two



This CD cover image released by Sony shows "Midnight Memories," by One Direction.

platinum-selling 2012 releases, "Up All Night" and "Take Me Home," adding some musical edge and variety, mostly through the use of turned-up

guitars and hit surfing through the mom-friendly 1980s.

"Diana," for instance, is all Sting and The Police as the boys hop on that burgeoning

bandwagon. The title track references Def Leppard's "Pour Some Sugar on Me" in a way that's oddly pleasing. And "Does He Know?" covers the same ground musically and thematically as Rick Springfield's "Jessie's Girl."

While the quintet is flirtatious, they never move beyond the casual come-on, and their paramours are painted as sassy and smart, usually turning down that invitation to go home with one of the boys. The rockin' "Little Black Dress" is about as spicy as it gets with its chorus of, "I wanna see the way you move for me, baby." Unlike most of their pop-music colleagues, bad girls are definitely not cool here, as they note on "Little White Lies."

The music is inclusive, too, as the group often paints itself as a refuge of sorts. "If you ever feel alone, don't! You were never on your own! And the proof is in this song," they sing on "Don't Forget Where You Belong."

And that's the kind of message every mom can get behind.

Springsteen 'Born to Run' manuscript is for sale

NEW YORK (AP)—A handwritten working manuscript of Bruce Springsteen's 1975 hit "Born to Run" will be offered at auction on Dec. 5, with a presale estimate of \$70,000 to \$100,000, Sotheby's said Wednesday.

The seller was not revealed. The auction house said the document used to be in the collection of Springsteen's former manager, Mike Appel.

Sotheby's said most of the lines in this 1974 version, written in Long Branch, N.J., are apparently unpublished and unrecorded, but the manuscript does include "a nearly perfected chorus."

Springsteen's thought process, written in blue ink on an 8 1/2-by-11 sheet of ruled notepaper, looks like this:

"This town'll rip the (out your) bones from your back / it's

a suicide trap (rap) (it's a trap to catch the young) your dead unless / you get out (we gotta) while your young so (come on! / with) take my hand cause tramps / like us baby we were born to run."

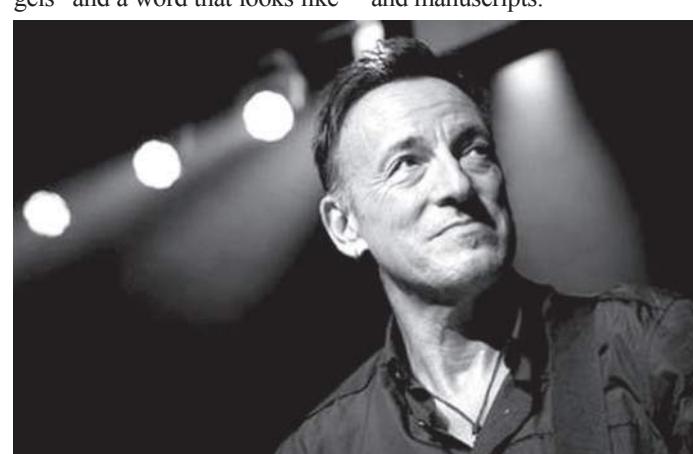
"The imagery and tone are constant from the present manuscript to the final song," the auctioneer said.

There are also some words in the margins: "Wild" and "Angels" and a word that looks like

"velocity," with the letter "t" in Springsteen's curlicue cursive.

"Although Springsteen is known to have an intensive drafting process, few manuscripts of 'Born to Run' are available, with the present example being one of only two identified that include the most famous lines in the song," Sotheby's said.

The document will be part of a Manhattan sale of fine books and manuscripts.



This Nov. 7, 2013 file photo shows musician Bruce Springsteen stands on stage at the Stand Up for Heroes event at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Toy company ends lawsuit over Beastie Boys parody

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A Northern California toy company says it has removed its parody of a popular Beastie Boys song from a promotional video that went viral.

GoldieBlox founder Debbie Sterling posted an open letter to the band's surviving members Wednesday saying the company also plans to withdraw a lawsuit it filed for the right to spoof the song "Girls."

The company filed the lawsuit last week, saying the Beas-

tie Boys threatened their own legal action for copyright infringement.

Sterling says she didn't know the Beastie Boys have a blanket ban on using their songs in advertisements.

GoldieBlox makes engineering toys for girls and tweaked the lyrics of "Girls" to talk about spaceships and software.

The video had spread across the Internet in recent weeks, with more than 8 million views on YouTube.



This Jan. 11, 2011 file photo shows cast member Ashton Kutcher, left, and Demi Moore at the premiere for "No Strings Attached" in Los Angeles.

Murder in the wedding party throws plans into question

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: My fiancee and I are getting married next summer. Last summer, my closest friend—a woman—was murdered. Her husband was charged with the crime. Both of them were to be a part of the wedding party. The husband, "Frank," was to be my best man.

I'm at a loss about how to deal with this. I can't believe that Frank is guilty, but the trial isn't likely to be finished by the date of the wedding. However, he is likely to be out on bail.

Frank has been one of my closest friends for many years, and I don't want to abandon him, but his presence would unnerves many of the guests who know about this. My fiancee and I are concerned that having him there would make our wedding "the one where the accused murderer showed up."

Do I include him? Should he maintain his place as my best man? If not, how do I rescind his invitation?

UNSURE IN CANADA



Dear Abby

DEAR UNSURE: Considering the notoriety that now surrounds Frank, he should not be your best man. His presence at the altar would distract from the bride, who is supposed to be the center of attention. This is the No. 1 no-no at weddings. However, I don't think you should rescind your friend's invitation to attend the wedding because he is innocent until PROVEN guilty.

DEAR ABBY: My girlfriend of six years spends weekends at my house where she has her own room with her clothing and personal things. Wanting her to be comfortable here, I have bought her some robes, PJs, slippers, etc. to use when she's here.

One thing she never seems to have is underwear. She has even borrowed mine on occasion. So I shopped online and put a dozen pair in her dresser drawer. I know her size, style and color preference, so I thought I might be the best boyfriend ever for doing it.

Oddly enough, she made no comment. And when I asked, she said, "What kind of boyfriend does that? It's SOOO weird."

Abby, I was crushed. Did I go too far? Please tell me I'm not weird.

DISMAYED IN DUNKIRK, N.Y.

DEAR DISMAYED: You're not weird. You are a giver, and it is a trait that should be appreciated. You did not deserve the putdown. Many women would have been touched by your thoughtfulness. I don't know what kind of men your girlfriend has had in her life before you came along, but it seems they didn't spoil her the way you're trying to.

DEAR ABBY: I recently married, and my husband and I are starting to think about when we should try to have children. I am having a hard time getting over the mindset that my parents instilled in me that pregnancy is bad—as in when you're a teenager and your parents tell you over and over. (At least mine did.) It has made me terrified of getting pregnant.

How do I get over this mantra and move forward in my life? We want to start a family, but I always have this nagging feeling like I'm not as excited to have kids as my friends are. (We are in our early 30s.) Are these feelings normal?

BRIDE IN PHOENIX

DEAR BRIDE: At this point, it might be helpful if you discussed this with your parents. After all, it was they who planted this seed of doubt in your head. I'm sure once they hear that what they planted has grown into a fear of having the grandchildren they would love to have, they will find the words to reassure you that a pregnancy after marriage is something to be celebrated. However, if your concerns continue after that, talk about them with your OB/GYN or a licensed counselor.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Durant, Thunder snap Spurs' win streak

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)— Kevin Durant had 24 points and 13 rebounds, Serge Ibaka added 17 points and 11 rebounds and the Oklahoma City Thunder snapped the San Antonio Spurs' 11-game winning streak with a 94-88 win Wednesday night.

Reggie Jackson matched his career high with 23 points on 10-of-14 shooting for Oklahoma City, which is 7-0 at home, the franchise's best home start since 2004-05, when it was in Seattle. The Thunder have won five straight games, their longest streak of the season.

The Thunder took control of a tight game with an 8-0 run in the third quarter and withstood a run by San Antonio midway through the fourth quarter.

Tony Parker had 16 points and seven assists for San Antonio (13-2), which was seeking the best start in franchise history. The Spurs also started 13-1 during the 2010-11 season. Portland, which entered Wednesday on an 11-game winning streak, is the only other team to have beaten San Antonio this season.

Suns 120, Trail Blazers 106

In Phoenix, Goran Dragic scored 31 points, Channing Frye added 25 and the Suns used their up-tempo style to recover from a poor start to snap the Trail Blazers' 11-game winning streak.

Markieff Morris scored 19 and twin Marcus Morris 15 for the Suns, who wiped out a 16-point second-quarter deficit to hand the Blazers their first loss since Nov. 5 against Houston.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 24 points and Damian Lillard scored 16 points for the Blazers, who had also won six straight on the road.

Pacers 99, Bobcats 74

In Charlotte, C.J. Watson made five 3-pointers in the fourth quarter and finished with 18 points to send Indiana past Charlotte for its fifth straight victory.

The Pacers (14-1) came in with the NBA's best defense and limited the Bobcats to 31 percent shooting.

Watson, who had made just 6 of 29 3-pointers this season, was 6 of 8 against the Bobcats.

Lance Stephenson had 15 points and 10 rebounds and Roy Hibbert added 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Pacers.

Heat 95, Cavaliers 84

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 28 points and seemed more relaxed than in previous games back in Cleveland, leading Miami to its eighth straight win.

James added eight rebounds and eight assists in his fifth game as a visitor against the Cavaliers, the team that drafted him and the one he left as a free agent three years ago to chase



Glen Davis had 19 points, and Arron Afflalo and Victor Oladipo each added 18.

The game was the first meeting between rookies Michael Carter-Williams and Oladipo, and both played big roles.

The Magic led by 15 points before fighting off several second-half surges by the Sixers, which they beat for 17th time in 20 meetings.

Thaddeus Young led Philadelphia with 26 points and Carter-Williams added 23.

Bulls 99, Pistons 79

In Auburn Hills, Taj Gibson had a career-high 23 points and the Bulls pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat the Pistons.

The Pistons stayed close for most of the game, but managed only seven points in the first 10 minutes of the fourth quarter. That allowed Chicago to increase their lead to as many as 24 points as they ended a four-game losing streak.

Luol Deng led the Bulls with 27 points. Rodney Stuckey finished with 25 off the bench for Detroit but no one else had more than 13. Josh Smith had 13 points and 11 rebounds and Andre Drummond had 10 points and 11 rebounds for the Pistons.

Nuggets 117, Timberwolves 110

In Minneapolis, Ty Lawson scored 23 points, reserve Nate Robinson added 15 and the Nuggets held off the Timberwolves.

Kenneth Faried added 13 points and had three alley-oop dunks as Denver won for the seventh time in nine games after a horrible start.

Kevin Martin scored 29 for Minnesota and Ricky Rubio added 17 points and 10 assists. Nikola Pekovic had 21 points and Kevin Love finished with 19. All five Minnesota starters scored in double figures.

Rockets 113, Hawks 84

In Houston, Francisco Garcia

scored a season-high 21 points, Aaron Brooks also had 21 and the Houston Rockets cruised to their third straight win.

Houston never trailed and again used a balanced scoring attack with James Harden out for the third straight game with a foot injury.

The Rockets went up by 12 on John Jenkins' 3-pointer early in the fourth quarter. Then Brooks outscored the Hawks 8-4 over the next 1½ minutes to extend Houston's lead to 90-74. Houston shot almost 52 percent from 3-point range with Brooks and Garcia combining to make seven of Houston's 14 3-pointers.

Mavericks 103, Warriors 99

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 22 points to offset a rough night for playmaking partner Monta Ellis, and the Mavericks held off a late charge from Golden State.

Nowitzki was 11 of 19 from the field and added three assists. He matched the team high with two steals.

Ellis finished with a season-low four points on 2-of-16 shooting, but he had 10 assists, including one to get Samuel Dalembert a dunk and push Dallas' dwindling lead to six at 101-95 with 1:21 remaining.

Stephen Curry led Golden State with 29 points as the Warriors stayed close a night after a tough one-point win in New Orleans.

Clippers 93, Knicks 80

In Los Angeles, Blake Griffin had 15 points and 13 rebounds, and Chris Paul had 15 points and seven assists before leaving with a strained right hamstring in the Clippers' victory over the plummeting Knicks.

J.J. Redick also scored 15 points as the Clippers comfortably finished their eighth win in 10 games despite losing their superstar point guard late in the third quarter when Paul hobbled to the locker room favoring his right leg.

Twins agree to terms with Nolasco

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The Minnesota Twins entered the offseason with a desperate need for starting pitching, and they're off to a pretty great start in addressing it.

Right-hander Ricky Nolasco and the Twins agreed to terms on a free-agent contract Wednesday, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press. The person requested anonymity because the team does not plan to announce a deal until Nolasco passes a physical.

Terms of the deal were not immediately available, but Yahoo! Sports reported that it was for four years and \$49 million. That's a hefty price for the Twins, who historically

Pitching to contact has become a bit of a sore spot for

have been reluctant to hand out big-money deals to free agents. Prior to Nolasco's contract, the most the Twins had spent on a free agent who did not come through their system was the three-year, \$21 million deal they gave Josh Willingham in 2011.

But their need was acute and Nolasco was widely considered one of the top available free agents in a thin crop of starting pitchers. He's walked just 2.1 batters per nine innings for his career, which makes him a perfect fit for the Twins, who have always placed a premium on control from their starters.

Twins fans, who have watched their team's starting staff get bludgeoned while throwing strike after strike right down the middle. But Nolasco also has a healthy 7.4 strikeouts per nine

innings, and he's shown the ability to get out of jams without letting the hitter put the ball in play.

Nolasco's Twitter account already has a Twins logo as its avatar, and this beleaguered team will no doubt be just as eager to welcome him into the fold. Nolasco pitched at least

185 innings in five of the last six seasons and will immediately slot in right near the top of what was the worst pitching staff in the majors last year.

The Twins have lost at least 96 games in each of the last three seasons, thanks in most part to their woeful starting pitching. Last year the starters had an ERA of 5.26. Toronto was the next worse at 4.81. Only two of their starters had ERAs under 5.00, with Samuel Deduno's 3.83 leading the way and Kevin Correia's pedestrian 4.18 next.

The Twins have also inquired about veteran Bronson Arroyo among other available arms, and are expected to continue adding players to beef up the rotation. Matt Garza and Phil Hughes are among the other viable options, and the Twins also could bring back Mike Pelfrey for depth.

Deadly crash puts light on Brazil's WCup troubles

SAO PAULO (AP)—With one thunderous crash, Brazil's troubled preparations for the World Cup are thrown in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons, just as soccer gears up for the high-profile setting of the schedule for next year's big event.

Part of the stadium that will host the tournament's opening match collapsed Wednesday, killing two workers and aggravating already urgent worries that Brazil won't be ready.

"It was a huge explosion," said 32-year-old stonemason Evandro Pereira, who was off at a cafeteria at the time of the lunchtime accident. "It was really very scary. We all ran out and we were shocked to see the crane had collapsed on top of the stands."

The accident at the Arena Corinthians, known locally as the Itaquero, could hardly have come at a worse time - just a week before the top names in soccer arrive for the draw that will determine where and when all 32 teams will play in the World Cup's opening round.

"The sound was as loud as a thunderclap or a huge explosion," said Rodrigo Vessoni, a reporter with the sports newspaper Lance who witnessed the acci-



A buckled metal structure sits on a part of the Itaquero Stadium in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013. The stadium is slated to host the 2014 World Cup opener.

dent. "There was a lot of running around, a lot of shouting. It was frightening. Chills ran through my entire body."

World Cup preparations have been plagued by setbacks including cost overruns, stadium delays, accidents, labor strife and huge street protests in the run-up to the June tournament,

once envisioned as a coming out party for South America's largest nation, which is also scheduled to host the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Already, public prosecutors and a workers union in Sao Paulo are demanding an investigation into conditions at the work site, saying construction

shouldn't resume until authorities deem the stadium safe.

Ricardo Trade, CEO of the local World Cup organizing committee, said authorities would determine if there is a need to suspend construction.

"There are seven months till the World Cup, not 10 days, so I don't believe this is going to

cause delays. But there is absolutely no guarantee on this," Trade said in a telephone interview.

The accident could lead to recriminations between local organizers and world soccer's organization FIFA, which has set a December deadline for all 12 World Cup stadiums to be ready.

The tournament begins June 12.

"I don't want to know about FIFA right now; we are worried about the families of the victims," said Andres Sanchez, former president of the Sao Paulo soccer club Corinthians, which is building the stadium. The club said workers would not return before a three-day mourning period.

The newspaper Estado de S. Paulo said public prosecutors had previously pointed to 50 irregularities at the venue, including some related to emergency drills.

The stadium was nearly finished before Wednesday's accident, which occurred when a crane crashed into a 500-ton metal structure. That structure then cut through the stadium's outer walls, destroying part of the outside of the building and slamming into a giant LED panel that runs across the facade.

Sanchez said it appeared the structure of the stadium was not compromised, meaning there should be enough time to recover before the World Cup.

"Structurally very little was affected," he said.

Six stadiums have already been declared ready for the games. But Brazil is still racing to finish the other six, and there is particular concern that the stadiums in Cuiaba, Manaus and Curitiba may not be ready by the end of December.

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Voyagers, 8Batters lead SBA league

The Jokers IT&E Voyagers and Poseidon 8Batters managed to hang on to their shaky leads in the SBA Budweiser Open 8-Ball League last week.

The Voyagers earned 146-64 record after last week's games in the Tuesday League to keep its precarious advantage over Joe's Saint Trading, which holds a 144-66 slate. Oceanside Docomo Hustlers is in third place with a 130-80 record, while Johnny's Crazy 8 and Bammy's Triggers are way behind in fourth and fifth

place, respectively. Johnny's Crazy 8 has a 108-102 card, while Bammy's Triggers sports a 102-108 mark.

In the Thursday League, Poseidon 8Batters also has a two-win lead over Poseidon Drunken Hustlers with the former earning a 126-84 card after last week's games against the 124-86 of the latter.

Completing Thursday League's standings are SOS Alamo Car Rental (121-89), Jokers Homeboyz (119-91), Bammy's Equalizers (112-98),

Wild Bill's Crazy 8 (97-113), Jonny Team's SCS (89-121), and Jonny's Gentlemen (52-158).

Meanwhile, the playoff round in the Thursday League started last night with Poseidon 8Batters colliding against Jokers Homeboyz and Poseidon Drunken Hustlers battling SOS Alamo Car Rental. Teams in the Thursday and Tuesday divisions will play in a two-week playoff round with the top finisher in each division fighting for the season championship. (*Saipan Tribune*)

Motorists' cooperation requested for Hell of Marianas

The 7th Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race is soon approaching and the NMI Cycling Federation would like to notify to all motorists on the morning of Dec. 7 to be particularly cautious from 6:30am to 9:30am on the north-bound lane of Isa Drive near San Vicente, Papago, Kagman and Capitol Hill where the cyclists will be riding in packs. There will be cones to indicate the bike lane as well as DPS officers and official media vehicles. If motorists can circumvent these portions of Isa Drive during the above times, it will prevent heavy traffic congestion and enhance safety for all.

The race starts at 6:15am at the Mariana Resort & Spa with international pro and amateur competitors from Japan, Korea, Russia, Australia, Hawaii, US mainland, Guam, China, Taiwan and of course, the CNMI. Individuals and teams will compete in various categories with cash prizes to the top pro and amateur road and mountain bikers.

The fastest pro men are expected to complete the grueling 100km course in approximately two hours 40 minutes. Much of Chalan Pale Arnold Road from La Fiesta towards the scenic sites will be congested with cyclists, volunteers, and team members.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
A group of bikers heads out of Talafofo Road during last year's Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race.

For additional safety measures, residents are asked to restrain their dogs in the morning along the route. The 100km (62 mile) course takes racers from Mariana Resort down to PIC through Koberville to the Airport, past Herman's Bakery through San Vicente, Papago, down to Lao Lao Golf Course entrance and back, down to Kingfisher Golf Links and back, down Capitol Hill, to the top of San Roque's Radar Station, to Suicide Cliff, Bird Island Lookout, Banzai Cliff and back to Mariana Resort. Drivers, please be careful as more bicyclists will be riding on the roads training from now until Dec. 7.

Volunteers who are interested in assisting with the race, please email homrace@yahoo.com

by tomorrow. For those already entered, the race packet pick up is set for Dec. 6 at the Mariana Resort Lobby (west conference room) from 2pm to 6pm.

Interested participants who wish to register can go to Gold's Gym Saipan or follow the link on www.hell-of-the-marianas.com or register directly online at <http://www.activeglobal.com/gl/road-cycling/saipan-northern-mariana-islands/hell-of-the-marianas-century-cycle-2013>. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Players of the Jokers IT&E Voyagers pose for a photo before their game in the Tuesday division of the SBA Budweiser Open 8-Ball League last week.

MAMI

From Page 32

45:01. Palacios prevailed in the 30 to 39 group after making it to the top at the 54:04 mark, while Aaron and Danao won in the over 40 and over 50 categories after logging 42:82 and 43:16, respectively.

In the women's division, Oshima-Berger returned on top after missing the last two editions of the annual race. She timed in at 42:10 on her Turkey Trot comeback to gain her fourth championship in the women's division. Oshima-Berger, who just completed the Mt. Fuji Marathon in Japan last Sunday, ruled the Turkey Trot's women's category for three straight years (2008 to 2010) and her time winning time in her fourth victory was the fastest, eclipsing the 42:55 she

logged in 2010.

Last year's first female finisher Amy Sletten dropped to second, but placed first in the open division after checking in at 48:52. Rounding out the top finishers in each age group in the women's division were Conatsu Kaga, Gabrielle Race, Pipit Ball, Chiharu Sato, and Irma Halaby. Kaga took the 12U top honors after posting 54:34, while Race time din at 1:05:38 to win the 17U age group. Ball was the champion in the 30 to 39 age group after tallying 51:23, while Sato placed first in the over 40 category after recording 56:19, and Halaby topped the over 50 division after registering 1:04:42.

Around 130 runners joined the Turkey Trot Run, which was NMA's penultimate race for the 2013 season. The association will culminate the year with the

win over Degree last week. Ballesteros was held to 8 points and canned only two treys before fouling out midway in the fourth.

With Ballesteros a bit off, PIC leaned heavily on James Abuy, who scored a team-high 25 points. However, Abuy's output was offset by the 26 markers of Bernard Montano and Armatech drew enough points from its other players to oust PIC. Elmer Pineda contributed 16 for Armatech, which got 12 and 10 markers from Martin Moreno and Sonny Ebuen, respectively.

In the second game, Laguna denied Degree an outright entry to the playoffs after having a 9-0 windup in the last 35 seconds of the match. Juna Tabora scored 6 straight points in that rally, which Rodney Catalla capped with a triple.

Degree went scoreless in the closing seconds of the game and committed costly turnovers, putting its playoff chances in danger. Degree absorbed its sixth straight loss after a strong 3-0 start. Degree's woes continued despite leading Laguna in the first half, 43-39.

Laguna grabbed the driver's

seat after the third period, 65-62, behind the 12 points of Jun Alipio. Then in the fourth, it was a seesaw battle until Degree collapsed, while Tabora stepped up and hit clutch baskets.

Tabora top-scored for Laguna with his 38 points, while Alipio and Catalla added 25 and 15, respectively. Jorge De Guzman paced Degree with his 27 markers, while Alex Ocampo chipped in 21.

First Game

Armatech 84 – Montano 26, Pineda 16, Moreno 12, Ebuen 10, Berline 8, Malasarte 6, Poquiz 2, Park 2.

PIC 64 – Abuy 25, Ricafort 10, Ballesteros 8, Tolentino 6, Bartolo 6, Apasan 5, Fernandez 2.

Scoring by quarters: 11-12, 37-29, 56-46, 84-64.

Second Game

Laguna 94 – Tabora 38, Alipio 25, Catalla 15, Darag 6, Zapata 4, Catacutan 2.

D&Q Degree 85 – De Guzman 27, Ocampo 21, Tobias 14, Jinang 7, Drilon 6, Pablo 6, de la Torre 4.

Scoring by quarters: 16-18, 39-43, 65-62, 94-85.

Christmas Island Relay set for Dec. 28. The 13.7-mile race will bring runners from Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi. The race is open to both team and individual runners. Each team should have five runners and with at least one member, who are in the over 50 age group, a female, or in the U16 division. There is no restriction in the individual race. Entry fees are \$25 for team and \$10 for solo. Registration will start at 5:15 at the southern parking lot of PIC, while the race will begin at 6am.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	6	8	.429	–
Philadelphia	6	10	.375	1
Boston	6	11	.353	1½
Brooklyn	4	11	.267	2½
New York	3	11	.214	3

Southeast Division

Miami	12	3	.800	–
Atlanta	8	8	.500	4½
Washington	7	8	.467	5
Charlotte	7	9	.438	5½
Orlando	6	9	.400	6

Central Division

Indiana	14	1	.933	–
Chicago	7	7	.500	6½
Detroit	6	9	.400	8
Cleveland	4	11	.267	10
Milwaukee	2	12	.143	11½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	13	2	.867	–
Houston	11	5	.688	2½
Dallas	10	6	.625	3½
Memphis	8	7	.533	5
New Orleans	6	8	.429	6½

Northwest Division

Portland	13	3	.813	–
Oklahoma City	10	3	.769	1½
Denver	8	6	.571	4
Minnesota	8	9	.471	5½
Utah	2	14	.125	11

Pacific Division

L.A. Clippers	11	5	.688	–
Golden State	9	7	.563	2
Phoenix	8	7	.533	2½
L.A. Lakers	8	8	.500	3
Sacramento	4	9	.308	5½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

7th Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament

PHOTOS BY ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Players of Shirley's Badminton Club pose for a photo after the opening ceremonies for the 7th Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament last week at the TSL Sports Complex.



Members of the Golden Racquets gather for a group photo.



Taga Badminton Club players smile for the camera.



The young players of Community Badminton Club pose for a group photo.



Members of defending champion Saipan Badminton Club pose for a photo.



Taga Badminton Club players perform during the cheering competition.



Shirley's Badminton Club members are all fired up during their performance.



NMBA president Jerry Tan addresses the participants.

Golden Racquet players show some moves during the cheering competition.



Durant, Thunder
snap Spurs' win
streak
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Saipan Tribune Sports



Deadly crash puts
light on Brazil's
WCup troubles

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Mami, Charlie top Turkey Trot

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Charlie Sendin and Mamiko Oshima-Berger had winning comebacks in yesterday's 35th Annual Turkey Trot Fun Run.

Sendin, who debuted in the 2012 edition of Northern Marianas Athletics' signature event and finished second overall behind Sean Smith, returned for the 4.2-mile race from Lower Base to Mt. Tapochao this year and bagged the top spot with an impressive time of 39:45. His winning time surpassed Smith's 44:04 and also his 2012 record (44:54), putting him in a company of strong runners who completed the uphill race under 40 minutes. Eli Torgeson holds the record time in the men's division after submitting 34:20 in 2008, while Stuart Smith also broke the 40-minute barrier after registering 36:46 in 2006.

The 35-year-old Sendin was among the small group of runners who pulled away from a pack heading up to Capital Hill.



Northern Marianas
Athletics

He was in the company of Michael Mancao, Manny Aaron, Beo Ngirchongor, and Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel. Mancao was ahead of the lead group before Sendin overtook him near the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Mancao, who is studying in Guam and just returned to Saipan last Wednesday to celebrate Thanksgiving with his family, settled for runner-up honors in the overall

standings, but finished first in the open division after timing in at 41:56.

Other male division top finishers were Anthony Fruit, Angelo Jones, Bo Palacios, Aaron, and Cesar Danao. Fruit ruled the 12-and-under division after submitting 54:11, while Jones reigned supreme in the 17-and-under age group after recording

See MAMI on Page 30



Sendin



Oshima-Berger

CBC off to strong start in Traders tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Community Badminton Club debuted in the 7th Traders Insurance Team Tournament with a 20-10 victory against the Golden Racquets over the weekend at the TSL Sports Complex.

The youthful club, which is bannered by U18 players, won its opening game in Northern Marianas Badminton Association's season-ending event after topping seven events—men's A and B doubles, women's A, AB, and C doubles, and mixed A and AB divisions. Golden Racquets won the men's C doubles, mixed B, and women's BC events to earn 10 points.

Andreau Galvez and Jexler Caranto were CBC's entries to the men's doubles A and they swept Edwin Montoya and Alvin Alvarez, 21-10, 21-18, to give their club 3 points. A win

via sweep earns a club 3 points and 2 for a three-game victory.

In the men's doubles B, Ezekiel Macario and Jordan Pangilinan also needed only two games to beat Edwin Maratas and Daniel Shen, 21-17, 21-17.

In the women's A division, Jordan's sister, Janelle teamed up with Jen Savellano and the U18 pair notched a victory against veterans Marylyn Montano and Lucelle Lampera. Savellano and Pangilinan won the opening game by 6 points, 21-15, before eking out a tough 21-20 victory in the second.

In the women's AB doubles, Savellano teamed up with anew with Pangilinan and foiled the upset bid of Anna Alvarez and So Young. The CBS duo cruised to a 21-9 victory in the opening game, but failed to close the match early when Alvarez and Young pulled off a 21-15 win in the second. Savellano and Pangilinan

See CBC on Page 30



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Janelle Pangilinan reaches in for a low shot, while Jen Savellano looks on during their women's A doubles game against Anna Alvarez and So Young in the Traders Insurance tournament last Saturday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Armatech boots out PIC



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Three Pacific Islands Club players just watch the towering Bruce Berline goes up for a shot during their first round meeting in the UFO Masters caging last month at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Armatech/MDX eliminated Pacific Islands Club in the 2013 UFO-Budweiser Masters Division Basketball League, following an 84-64 triumph in

their second round outing last Tuesday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Both teams played their last game in the See ARMATECH on Page 30

